SIR WALTER OF KENT

BY JULIUS A. LEWIS

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SIR WALTER OF KENT

A TRUTHFUL HISTORY OF THREE CENTURIES AGO

Printed with the Consent of Sir Walter's Few Living Descendants

EDITED BY

JULIUS A. LEWIS

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THE EDITOR'S EXPLANATION.

The Editor has taken no unnecessary liberties with the manuscript of this history. In some places where the meaning was obscure, by reason of the use of too much that was obsolete, he has found it advisable to introduce more modern terms. But at the same time it has been his endeavor to retain as much as possible of the writer's quaintness of expression. The manuscript, read as it has been for two full centuries by the descendants of Sir Walter, and their friends, is in places dim from the great wearing which it has undergone. In its present condition it could not well be examined by the public. But, to any fancier of archaical handwritings who should make suitable application, the Editor would be pleased to show the original pages.

Oddly enough the idea of having the history printed did not occur to the descendants of Sir Walter until the commencement of the present Century.

SIR WALTER OF KENT.

I.

OF THE WYNNINGTONS.

I, Sir Walter Wynnington, Knight, of the County of Kent, begin this narration of my life's history at Merton Hall, my ancestral seat, in the month of October, in the year of Our Lord Sixteen hundred and thirty-three, and in the reign of his gracious Majesty Charles. In more than one of the scenes or events, which it shall be my constant strife to describe with clearness no more than with truth, shall there figure persons of exalted rank. For be it said that it has fallen to my lot to stand uncovered in the presence of both her Majesty Elizabeth, and of Henry of Navarre. And likewise have I beheld, and moreover had intercourse of friendly kind, with two men who were far from exalted, yet whom I did deem as truly great, and to whom Fame shall one day give lofty place. Of these twain, one was the sweet-tongued player-poet, Master Will Shakespeare. The other was a Spanish soldier, though were his deeds of might wrought by pen rather than by sword. Came I by chance upon him while starved he proudly in a garret of Madrid. And there sat I in awe and listened to the lofty words that fell from the lips of Miguel de Cervantes.

Could I scarce name the object that incites me to this work, which even now doth take far more the shape of sport than of toil. Mayhap there lurks within me somewhat of the poet; and urged by feeble rays of what might once have been celestial fire, I seize upon the pen and deeds record. Of a surety it is from impulse rather than design that this page and its many fellows shall be filled. Fain would I have the scenes that I shall picture beheld in fancy by others. Yet would I not have this thing come to pass until I shall have rested long in yonder churchyard. Constance, who now sits nigh me in her easy chair, says that I shall read unto her every word which may in this history be writ. Will these pages be read by myself to her, yet to none others. For as I must needs, to make my story full and true, lay bare her heart and mine, I ask that a generation shall have passed ere this shall a second time be read. Nay, I would long spin out rather than contract the limit of the time. Not until there has been well begun Century the Eighteenth of our Lord, would I have this to see the light. It is my wish that, if before the period may be run God send not his Son upon the Eastern clouds to judge us of our deeds, my truthful tale shall be read by all who may have the wish to know the things whereof I shall a record make. When have I to Constance read them, these pages shall be sealed, and on the outside of the packet will I write my command that it be not opened till that time which I have named. Then let this act be done by him who is the elder of my name and blood. But if my house shall then have passed to dust, whoever hath the book may break the seal.

Albeit I could never find it in my heart to reproach any man for his lowly birth, or for that cause to hold him as

unworthy of a kindly grasp or word, and though for vain boasting have I small fondness, it gives to me a glow of pride to think that the Wynningtons were ever a gentle race. The first of our family to reach the shores of England came, when scarcely but a lad, in the train of Norman William. My sire of that day did tread the same timbers which bore the Conqueror across the waves to seize upon the mighty legacy of Edward the Confessor. When the ship grated upon England's sands, and William leaped from off the bulwarks and strode to shore, Knight Wynnington was close upon his leader's track. Our tradition hath it that as the Conqueror pushed on in eager haste his foot slipped, and his chosen followers beheld him sprawling upon the slimy sands. By this fall were splashed our sire's cheek and cloak, yet did he then remark the ready wit by which the great Duke turned the mishap to his own vantage. Holding up his hands, filled as these were with dripping English soil, did William exclaim:

"Thus do I take seisin of this land! By the Splendor of God, as far as it doth reach, is it mine." Then glancing round to note the effect of this stroke upon his followers, he was minded that they looked to share in the mighty spoil, and he added: "Yes, it is mine—and yours."

Knight Wynnington hath handed down to us that the thing which did the most impress him, in all that day upon the field of Hastings, was the determined, relentless look on the grim face of the man of Conquest as he cried unto his archers:

"Shoot up your Norman arrows!"

Though full sure I am that 'twould not so have been with me, our sire felt no pity for the o'erthrown King,

when he gazed upon brave Harold stark and cold. In course of time it came to pass that he who held these lands in Kent which now are mine in fee, a Saxon who minded not the blessings of the Norman rule, rested under imputation of conspiring gainst his rightful lords, and fled cross seas. Then it was that William was minded to reward a faithful follower; and this small domain of Merton came into hands of the Wynningtons. The first of our house years later journeyed into Normandy, and found welcome at his monarch's court. He was with his master when the stout-grown King rose in fury to his feet, and did swear, by the Splendor of God, that he would be avenged upon Philip of France for his jest upon him. Our sire would have followed his sovereign again unto the wars, but for the fatal act of chance that made Death the Conqueror's master. Mayhap he then knew more of the splendor of God, and of his wrath as well. The faithful Wynnington grieved with bowed head, while they placed the regal clay beneath the marble in Caen.

One of our house took up the Cross and followed glorious Richard of the Lion Heart unto the distant battle-grounds of Palestine. At Acre did he gallop behind the Champion of England as sped that valiant prince across the field, while with resistless lance he swept his thousands to the earth. Of that warrior King did our Crusader say he marveled much at his prowess, his splendor, his magnanimity and his arrogance. A Wynnington did stand upon the hillside at Cressy, below the King, but far above the foremost rank where the Black Prince waited for the might of France. He oft had told in after years how he watched the glistening pageant, as moved along in swaying ranks the French. The nobles

clad in richness did ride beneath their shining banners as calmly as to a tourney field. And glanced they with the eyes of scorn up to the steel-lined hill, while dreamed they not that there destruction lurked. Oft did he tell how he beheld upon great Edward's firm, commanding face gleams of joy and pride as looked he down upon the marvels which his war-like boy fast wrought.

In the bitter struggles where two rival houses did strive each to prove by blood its claim unto the crown, the Wynningtons wore the white rose of York. Two of them gave their lives for that cause. Sir Stephen Wynnington, my great-great grandsire went with Richard upon the Field of Bosworth. He ever held the last York, usurper though he were, as one painted far more black than of a truth he was. Though called he the Hunchback cruel and murderous, where stood those he looked upon as foes within his path; yet did he deem the man as fitted well by nature for the great affairs of state. He did say that would the land have thrived full well neath the last York's rule, could he but long have sat upon the throne. Sir Stephen told how on the morn that was his last, King Richard threw himself upon the ground and long drank from out the spring, which even yet is called Dick's well. Then rising to his feet he gazed across the field upon the hosts of Richmond, and he said it mattered not whether he or yonder upstart gained the day, the blood of such as clung unto the cause that fell would flow in every corner of the land. Yet was not this prophecy fulfilled. Mayhap it was a sop to make his doubtful throne secure, that Seventh Henry, as Richmond had become, lopped not off the heads of rank which had upheld the cause of York. Had he but took revenge upon his one-time foes, the

Wynningtons would have passed unto the block, and strangers would have come into their inheritance. Though he did deem that King as more than clement, yet came it not to pass that Sir Stephen's heart e'er warmed unto his master. Oft did our sire rail at the meanness of him who wore the crown. More times than one did Henry the Seventh on false plea of war-like rumors, or of sham needs of state, procure consent of Commons for a weighty tax upon his subjects. And would he then, with greed of miser, count the bright results of thin-veiled theft, and hide them in his strong vault. When paid he from his purse his gold and silver at the King's behest, Sir Stephen did speak in secret some seditious thought. But did his son, Sir Thomas, in full course of time avenge his sire for these unjust levies of the tax. For Henry the Seventh having paid his great debt—mayhap he did look upon it as a tax—to nature, and Henry the Eighth having come upon the throne, Sir Thomas did in modest way aid and abet the youthful monarch to scatter wide the yellow coins, which had his father took, in gross extortion and on pretence false, from most unwilling hands.

Our traditions have it that in his latter years Sir Thomas oft would dwell upon the oddness of his royal master's thoughts and ways. He said so set the King was sure to be in all which did pertain unto the doctrines he loved, that to dispute him on the smallest point were to invoke grave danger. And unlike so many of the royal blood did he hold in high esteem the sacredness of marriage vows. Nor were he apt to do violence to those which he himself had taken on the altar steps, until he deemed himself absolved of such by action of the laws he called

most just, and in the framing of the which his hand had done its share. And if the haste were such that to his loyal headsman he found need to look for aid, he brought the business to a proper end with true regard for Law, he having first in modest way made known unto his trembling Lords and Commoners the thing he wished. When last Sir Thomas went to Court right well was he received by him who had been his friend. The stout King Henry had but little while afore taken unto himself another wife. She was the fifth of all his consorts, and his second Catherine. His Majesty was joyous in his mood. He told our sire of his great happiness, and led him into the presence of the Queen, who with gracious condescension received her guest, while her royal spouse gazed upon her with proud and beaming eyes. Sir Thomas told how he did mark the artful look of blushing consciousness with which Queen Kate in charming way made her soft replies unto his compliments. 'Twas meet that in her day of sunny hopes she dreamed not that there lurked behind her royal robe the shadow of the scaffold.

The Wynningtons have been staunch Protestants ever since King Henry the Eighth, perceiving that the Papal power stood firm and strong twixt him and the ripe lips and fair form of sweet Ann Boleyn, swore that he would purge his realm of Rome's errors. And in the years when Mary sat upon the throne my grandsire, brave Sir Hugh, gave up a tempting vantage that would have come through royal favor, rather than to turn him from the faith which his father had embraced. 'Twas said that he were even marked for punishment, that might have been no less than burning at the stake, had not then weak Mary went unto

another world. Though Protestant I am, and trusting that all Wynningtons to come shall hold the doctrines that seem meet unto me, yet look I not with angry eyes upon the men who cling still to the ancient faith. Though there be many called Catholics, who have done foul and cruel wrongs unto the people of my own belief, yet would I not for this condemn all they who bow themselves to Rome. What thought the hordes which falsely wore the Cross upon the eve of good Bartholomew slew their thousands of the other creed? What though a band of witless men of zeal did here in England plot to blow into eternity our august reigning House with Lords and Commons? They who do these acts must needs be guided on their way by lust for wrongful power, or by that wild excess of bigot thoughts, which alike doth rob them of their reason and of that human pity which their Master taught. Nor was there aught in all the teachings of their ancient faith that warrant gave for deeds revolting to the minds of honest men. And though I weigh the matter well, see I not why they who do avow themselves good Catholics, and they who cry with pride that they be Protestant, should arm gainst each other, and bring their doctrines for settlement upon the bloody field. Do not both worship give unto the same Trinity? Do not they both believe in the self-same atonement, and resurrection from the dead, and future state? Though each has fought, and may yet make war, I deem that they do this thing more as bodies of men that have taken to the field for some politic ends, than as true followers each of its chosen faith. Though some with long-drawn faces oft declare that I do wrong unto my kind by words of toler-

ance, yet will I not do aught to bring about a strict enforcement of laws whereof there is no need against the Catholics among my neighbors. I believe they do have the right to that belief which conscience hath convinced them of. To persecute a man for honest thought, I do deem as most unworthy of an English Knight.

II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

When my father, Sir Philip, came into his inheritance upon the death of his sire, did he find the estates of Merton much encumbered. For had Sir Hugh not only been greatly given to hospitality, but likewise was he most generous unto the poor. As this did in course of time become noised abroad, some of his distant kinsmen induced him to relieve their wants. They did not of a truth demean themselves so much as to ask alms of my grandsire, yet when they came to make him their visits, he would ask them as had been his wont how each one did, how throve his health, and the healths of his family, and if were his house in good repair, or had he need of aught. And then would each tell his woes—of sickly wife, and many children to be clothed and fed, of leaking roofs and chimneys tottering to the fall. And when the kindly patron would unstring his purse, each with tears and protestations would say him nay. At length Sir Hugh, well nigh with force, would thrust upon them each a sum. Then calling in profusion down God's blessings on his head they rode away. Nor came they again to Merton until their needs had grown to what these had been afore. And troubles did fall upon those of his tenants who had the art and roguery to practice on his kindly nature; and from these there came no rents for

lands or dwellings. And once there went unto my grandsire old Sir Jasper Townsend, whom had many held to be a miser. The old man did vow that all the tales about his wealth were false. In truth had he most pressing need of a sum. Sir Hugh craved pardon for having given ear to such idle rumor, and loaned his neighbor the full amount he wished, and without the just security which was his due. And then within a year it came to pass that old Sir Jasper was found one pleasant morn quite dead beside his open strong-box, within the which were sacks filled with golden coins that 'twould have been his joy to count again, had not come so swift his time of final reckoning. When learned Sir Hugh of this he was wroth, and did he swear that for once had imposition been made upon his generosity. And as old Sir Jasper's heir seemed somewhat loathe to make just restitution, my grandsire did avow that he would take process of the Law that he might have his own. Whereat the loan was paid from out the miser's ample hoard.

To restore the estates of Merton to that condition which it seemed meet to him, my father saw the need of much frugality. Yet would he never suffer any to speak one jot of mild reproach against his sire for having wasted substance that did by right belong unto his house. Yet did not the desire to rid his fair estates of all the debt which weighed upon it lead Sir Philip, when came he to the business of choosing for Merton a mistress, to seek the dower that the bride might bring. More than one proud maid had by her gracious smiles cast out the hint that she would count it no disgrace to come from the altar as my Lady Wynnington. Of they were Mistress Joan Mowbray, only daughter of old Squire Mowbray, who as all the

County knew would have a portion of no less than five and thirty thousand guineas. Yet did my father pass her by and seek the hand of Lucy, the orphan kinswoman of old Sir Peter Bulkley, whose dower could scarce be more than half a thousand guineas. Gave she consent, yet not until he, against all seeming hope, had courted her for full a twelve-month. It might be that he would have valued in small way a prize, to win the which would have cost no labor save the breath of asking. Yet was fair Lucy, as they said in after days, of a most bewitching face and form, with charm of manner, yet coquettish in her way. And Squire Mowbray's heiress was of face quite plain, with stout form which 'twas said partook of squareness rather than of curve. Whatever weight it was that being thrown into the balance sent up the guineas of the Mowbray dower, my sire had his choice, and did keep with it the encumberment of his estates. After two short years of happiness came a great grief unto Sir Philip. His Lucy passed unto the realms, where be it hoped the good wot not of the pangs that fill the souls of dear ones whom they leave behind.

His much beloved wife had, a twelve-month ere she died, brought unto him a son and heir in the person of myself. The time of my birth, as written in the records of Merton parish was the eighth day of October in the year of our Lord fifteen hundred and seventy-five. In my early boyhood, as I wandered through the broad hallway of Merton, would I pause and look up in wondering way at the portrait which they told me was of my dead mother. Little did I comprehend what they had meant; nor was I conscious of one jot of that which might approach a sense of yearning towards her whose counterfeit upon the

canvas seemed to calmly meet my gaze. I doubt if then I did even in vague way note the fact that she were passing fair. It doth seem to me that boys—or at the least such as I have been—are somewhat like the cubs of lower beasts, since they are minded mostly to obtain full satisfaction of their own wants and whims, and have no inborn care for other's needs. Comes later on that finer sense to teach us by the wounds which we ourselves do not escape, that it were far beneath us to inflict a wanton hurt upon the kindly feelings of our fellows. Then may we learn to comprehend the higher joys, and, alas, as well life's bitter pangs. And in same kind, through cub-like blindness, did I not perceive the great loss that had befell me in my infant days, until at length my slow maturing mind had reached a higher plane, and entrance gave unto a gentle grief which had no need for tears.

Sir Philip did in these early years of mine occupy himself in the devising and carrying out of frugal schemes, by which the weight of debt upon our Merton was by slow degrees so lightened that he began to entertain some faint hope of handing down unto his heir a heritage freed from bonds of money-lender. And had this much to do, in my belief, toward turning him from brooding thoughts upon his great bereavement. I saw him little, save when he did ask for me, and I was sent to him either in the library, where his few books ranged upon one broad shelf looked to my wondering eyes a vast collection, or else as he sat with his wine in the dining-hall. Do I recall the soft glow which were then on his thin cheeks, and the whiteness of his broad, thoughtful brow. Would he take me on his knee, and gently brush back my locks, and with kindly smile look into my eyes, though in my blindness saw I not

the light of his paternal love. Then would he much question me of my doings, and would instruct me as to how I should comport me with respect unto my elders, how I should ever spare the feelings of the lowly, and how I should speak the truth. Then would he ask if since last I sat upon his knee I had failed to follow out these precepts. And more than once did I, with consciousness of having done great wrong, stammer out a false reply in manner which to him was full confession of my guilt. Then would he urge me on till I made to him confession of the deed. At this he would in strong terms point out to me the sinfulness of lying. Yet if at first I frankly did admit that I had wrongly done, would he pat me upon the head, and tell me I was brave to speak the truth. And if my sins had proved to be of light and venial sort, would he give unto me a grave reproof. Yet if my misdeeds were of more weighty kind—had I not borne myself in seemly way toward my elders, had I spoke harsh and cruel things to they of humble sort, had I told rank untruth, or taken that to which I lacked just claim, or had some other wrongful act performed, would then my sire, with kindness in his look, though mingled much this was with firm resolve, administer unto his son chastisement mild. And this reminder that transgressors' ways are hard did seem most harsh to me but for the moment. So when at length my eyes were dried, and had the traces of the tears been washed from off my face, had I within my breast no thought of rancor toward the kindly hand which had some feeble buffets given me for mine own good. Firm am I yet in the belief that these same trouncings, which in my boyhood I did receive, were as a needed medicine unto me, and that the results were goodly in their kind. Though,

'tis true I did refrain from the forbidden acts far more from fear of chastisement than from love of right, yet my sire's lessons, thus brought home, left deep impressions that I often pondered on in wiser years. When it chanced that Sir Philip caused me to be sent to him in his library in the quiet of a Sunday afternoon, would he strive to impress on me some of the truths of our sacred religion. He bade me fear God, and obey as best I could his commandments. And, reverent soul that he was, he pictured out our Lord's fair life among Earth's people, and he did urge upon me to ever bear in mind that bright example.

Having himself thus looked unto my moral welfare, and likewise having arranged with Parson Hayden of Merton parish to tutor me in worldly learning, Sir Philip did deem it meet and wise to leave the drudgery of caring for my daily wants to his housekeeper, Sarah Quick. She it was who saw that I was fed and clothed and tucked up snugly in my truckle-bed of winter nights. And likewise saw she to it that I was hunted out betimes of a morn, and scrubbed and toweled to a proper state of cleanliness. As well she made it her rule that each day I had such number of scoldings as my defiance of her laws deserved, or as the needs of her oft-changing temper should demand. Was this Sarah the daughter of a yeoman of the better sort, who dying, bequeathed unto her a sum sufficient for her wants, had she been minded to pass her days in idleness. Suitors did she once have in some number; yet she heeded them not, since were they but yeomen like to her father. For did she deem that having risen from her former state to the post of Keeper of the Keys of the Knight of Merton, she had in certain measure reached the outer border

of gentility. And hence might no yeoman cherish in his common breast the affronting thought of taking unto himself her money. Yet since no Baron, Knight, Squire, nor man of Church, Medicine or Law, came courting her, must needs poor Mistress Quick remain a spinster. Tall was our Sarah, and somewhat raw of bone. Though well beneath the age of forty years, as did the parish record full attest, her teeth were few. Now while those teeth that did survive were minded to protrude themselves, was she from vanity not prone to show her defect unto the gazing world. Hence would she ever and anon fast close her mouth to hide the empty gums, while her remaining teeth incited to this act by nature, as often strove to see the light. Did this ne'er-ceasing struggle give to her lips a strange but frequent motion that added not unto her charms. Oft in the morning when came she to see me cleansed and jacketed, would she wear a visage most morose and sour. Then all the suds within the Hall lacked power of making clean its much washed heir. And did it seem as if my collar might not ever learn to fix itself in proper way upon my jacket. Then would she sigh, and say:

"In faith thou wilt make a pretty lord of Merton! Art thou not shamed of thyself? For have I known—or rather have I seen—the children of common yeomen that were neater and cleaner and fairer to look upon than the son of good Sir Philip, whom God save, and than whom there never lived a kinder or more noble Knight. No wonder that his face be grave and sad of aspect. He mourns that he doth have so much a sloven as his Walter for an heir."

And yet at even of another day would Sarah beam in kindly fashion upon me, as I would read to her from out a dog's-eared book that was full many fathoms out beyond

my youthful depth, and of which she failed, I would be sworn, to comprehend one jot. Yet plied she on her needle with her wonted skill till I had stumbled over many lengthy words, and at last in want mayhap of breath I paused, would she say:

"Thou readest well, my gracious boy. How much wisdom hath my Walter, and how he doth gain in grace and charm of look from day to day. When thou art grown, and come to man's estate, and in honor take the place of good Sir Philip, whom God preserve us yet full many years, thou shalt give much credit unto Merton. Thou canst never know, my own beloved one, how much of love I do bear thee."

Then would she kiss me and gaze fondly into my face. And should it but chance that then my stomach were in the humor for her jams, or such confections as 'twas her pride to make and lock in closets with her jingling keys, I would make sure of speedy feast, not in truth by asking for the stuff, but by dropping hints that did serve as well. Would I in manner such as this speak unto her:

"Good Sarah, was that jam of currants, which thou give to me but three night since, of the best e'er made in all of Kent. I vow there is none other who might make it as thou didst. Too bad it is the last of it be gone."

"Thou'rt wrong, dear Walter," she then would make reply. "At least three other jars of that same jam have I in yonder closet, and shalt thou taste the thing again. Glad am I in my heart it suits thy fancy."

Then would she lead me to the place where she had hid in rare profusion the sweets for which I longed. Of these would I right quickly take my fill. And then with tastes of different things, which she would hand to me,

meantime much dwelling on the merits of each one, and how 'twas brought unto perfection, would I still farther most unwisely stuff my poor self. But if a passing illness did come as speedy act of punishment for gluttony, would I accept the same in all good part; nor made I any outcry, or called for medicines. And sometimes would it chance, on the day next following that which had been marked by such great kindness from good Mistress Quick, that her temper seemed intent to make amends for its brief laxity. And then upon me would she new reproaches heap. If aught I said in just extenuation, would she more angry wax; and if I made no manner of excuse, still would she rage the more. And if 'twould happen that her wrath did reach a certain pitch, would she with open hand give me rude buffets about the head. Or, should I keep me clear of her long arm, it might be that missiles of small size and weight were within her reach. At me then would such be hurled with swiftness, and of times with skilful aim. 'Twas now my anger in its turn was seen, and would I tell her in my simple words to the purport that she had exercised in rude excess that measure of authority which had been given unto her. And would I vow that I would go to Sir Philip, and in his ear name these great indignities which had been heaped upon his heir. Yet ere I had passed many steps with such intent, would come there in my mind the thought that vixen though this Sarah was, and would ever be, yet had she done me many kindly acts, and at odd times did love me much. Then I bethought me of the honey, deeply laid, of her smooth flattery. Though full appeared I surely would not be, yet went I not unto my sire.

III.

SARAH'S ROMANCE.

My early tutor wore a look of wisdom, deep and most profound, whene'er there lay an opened book upon his lap. Yet was the groundwork of his knowledge of weak and unsubstantial kind. In person was the Parson large and tall, with limbs of great strength. His face was full, but were his eyes small and given much to shifting quick their glance. Proud was he indeed that he had come of ancient blood. In truth did he belong to the younger and the penniless branch of a house that had once been great. It seemed to some that he was by nature fitted more to be a soldier than a churchman, and that he might have thriven by arms. Yet though he did possess the outer equipments of a soldier, had I from knowledge of the man some doubt if there were within him that sort of courage which doth cause one to stand and firmly face a 'proaching foe. But of a truth was his way and tone of war-like kind when spoke he aught of that which touched his ire. Nor was Master Hayden given much to reverence, for have I seen him in the chancel of Merton Church, reading the prayers with distant look, as if his mind were bent on other things. And likewise have I seen him at his discourse, in the which he took but little pains, stumbling on with weary look, as if he would the business were at end. Like full many others had he entered the Church

more from a love of ease and dignity than for the doing of God's work. Did I not of truth thus weigh and sift the character of Parson Hayden till had I come to wiser years. While he did guide me toward the outer gates of wisdom, held I the man in awe, albeit I as his scholar shrewdly guessed that strong though he looked to be, yet was he weak in many things. Though given was he not to put upon himself much of pother in his visits to the poor and lowly of his flock, yet loved he dearly to sit at the boards of they of substance. No Squire had need to summon Master Hayden twice unto the same feast. And was he minded to have Knights oft press their hospitality on him. But should a Baron, or indeed an Earl, ask him to sit at meat within their halls, though he were only bidden to take a vacant seat, then were he filled unto the full with joy.

One even when might my age have been a dozen years, my father sent for me, and when I had come into his presence, as sat he at his board with Parson Hayden for his guest, he had a chair put by his own and bade me sit. My tutor beamed on me with gracious smile, and spoke some pleasant things, whereof the meaning were but small. Then did I in secret make comparison betwixt his present way, and that in which it was his wont to greet me when he would come to set me at my tasks. The glow of good wine was now upon his face, which was by nature fair, and was he well to look upon, as in graceful way he sat toying with his glass from which he oft would sip. Did he listen with much show of respect unto Sir Philip, who told of the great thrift of a certain one of his tenants. And when at length there had been silence for a moment, my tutor put down his glass and began to inveigh gainst Rome,

saying she were filled with abominations—that her followers loved the most to cut the throats of honest men. And went he on with reasonings of bigot kind, to all of which my sire harkened with patient look. And when had he come to end of all his discourse upon that head, did Master Hayden lean towards his host, and in way of confidence, and in lowered tone, he said:

"Thy neighbor over West—I need not name him—"

Sir Philip did nod his head, as if to show he comprehended who was meant, and said:

"And an honest Knight, I will be sworn."

"But yet a Catholic," went on the Parson, "and as such is he given by precept and habit to conspiracy and sedition. Of him did our noble friend, the Baron de Wycherly, speak to me but two days gone by. It were his wish that this Knight we know of, be closely watched—that the laws gainst himself and the fellows of his religion be put in force in all rigor so far as is he concerned. And moreover would the Baron have it that this man of Rome receive not even scant courtesy from his neighbor—that by none should he be sought—even that he be passed by in silence and contempt. May it please thee, Sir Philip, to know that our noble friend, whose interest may be of much service to thee, counts upon thy aid and counsel in this same matter."

And now had come a shadow on my sire's face, and doubt I not that he would have spoken sharp words unto the Parson, but that he was his guest; and furthermore had he for his cloth respect. Repressing, no doubt, much warmth of thought, he calmly, yet with firmness, said:

"Not till I do have full proof that he be rogue should I lend aid to persecution of any man. Shall I condemn

all they of Rome, when full well I know there be many of that belief who live more pure and seemly lives than do I, whom God forgive for many breaches of his laws? So, when thou seest de Wycherly again, thou canst say to him that I have been by thee informed of the things that are to be done in this matter, and that I do deem it due to mine own honor that in these same I have no hand."

Whereat the Parson, filled with confusion and in stammering way, craved pardon if he had put the message of the Baron in unpleasing light. And while upon this he were yet intent, my father did pat me on the head, and lead me to the door.

Was it not long thereafter when I did note that all our people began to make show of great excitement. Had some most anxious visages, while a few put on fierce looks. Yet my sire wore his wonted calmness of mien. Was my tutor of they whose minds seemed ill at ease. When at first convenient time I asked of him questions touching the cause of his and others' worriment, did he explain that our land of England was threatened by grave dangers. He said that Philip the Second of Spain had set up claim to the crown worn by our good Elizabeth, upon the most baseless plea that it had come to him by right of marriage with Queen Mary, whom were we wont to term as Bloody. And was this cruel Romish prince fitting out a vast fleet and an army which would soon set sail for our shores. Should these Spaniards conquer the true English who opposed them, would they destroy every one of the Protestant faith. When had I learned all this did I burn with zeal to join my elders in beating off the invaders; and then I asked of Master Hayden if he thought Sir Philip would permit me to go and by his side fight gainst the Spaniards.

Did he give me full assurance that my sire would not listen for one moment to this thing. From day to day the talk of danger grew more and more; and then one even it came to my ears that Sir Philip had brought forth the armor of the Wynningtons, and had seen to the burnishing of portions of the same, which 'twas his avowed intent to use. The next morning came to me a servant who said that my sire had the wish to see me in his library. When I went in to him wore our Knight a bright breast-plate, and hung at his side a sword, ancient of design. Did he place his hand upon my shoulder, and say:

"Walter, I go forth to fight the enemies of England; and if it should chance I come not back to Merton, do thou remember all of my teachings and precepts. Obey such guardian as shall then be placed over thee, until thou shalt come of age. And in thy youth and manhood conduct thyself as one full mindful of the honor of his ancient race."

Then giving me blessings and embrace did he leave, and mounting his black hunter rode with many from our part of Kent toward the great camp of England's defenders. That day came the Parson from his own poor dwelling to tarry at Merton Hall while its master were away. Was he ever on the lookout for tidings, and would he with long face bring to Mistress Quick and his pupil wild rumors that the fierce men from the Armada, boasted as Invincible, were already on our soil, dealing forth death and destruction. Again would he come with hopeful mien and say 'twere rumored that the Spaniards were driven back. At last did he one night bring to us with most joyful face true tidings that the Armada was scattered to the winds. And were it with much rejoicings that we welcomed back

Sir Philip, with his sword yet undrawn. Then went we all to Merton Church, and gave thanks to God for this deliverance from the perils of the enemy.

'Twas about this time I first began to note that a change had come o'er Mistress Quick. Astonished was I to perceive that there had crept into her temper an odd softness. 'Tis true that would she still of times rail at me, yet would there be a vast deal less of sharpness at her tongue's end. Nor hurled she at my head so much as one small missile of all the things which lay convenient to her hand. And did she dress with far more of neatness and of nicety than of old. Ribbons wore she in profusion; and her hair, which had been wont to descend again within an hour of the time she put it up, now did hold its rightful place, and had a smoothness that seemed passing strange to me. And more than once caught I the spinster standing before a mirror and making strange grimaces at herself. Once, when knew she not that I was watching her, she walked across the floor with mincing gait and placed herself in strange, fantastic postures, and the while would murmur in affected way, but in a key so low I caught them not, words that seemed to cause her great delight. Then would she laugh softly; and I noted that in one hand she held a fan, while in the other was a kerchief. These did she flourish, now about her head, and anon at arm's length. I feared me that poor Sarah had lost her wits, and weighing not the many trials that befell me through her perverse temper, I grieved at thought that she perhaps were lost henceforth to Merton. One day when had come my tutor for our lessons, and was passing toward our study-room, I saw Sarah approach and cross his path. Then did she simper, and glance at him in coy way from neath her drooping

lashes, the while striving much to overcome the moving habit of her lips, and hold the same in rest. And as she passed along did she turn her head and glance archly cross her shoulder at the Parson, who seemed amazed at her strange bearing. And when she had passed from sight, he with shrug of shoulder, and yet with look of satisfaction in his face, asked of me:

"Has she been long took thus with malady of mind?"

"For some weeks past, " I made reply, "has she been somewhat strange of speech and manner. And fear I she may not return unto her wonted ways."

This same prospect seemed no cause of worriment to Master Hayden, for more than once while were we at the lesson, did he smile with look of much amusement, yet not in the way it was his wont to lightly take my blunders. When it came Sunday morning, I beheld poor Mistress Quick decked in her finest gown, and much beribboned and gewgawed, as if she were a beauty of an age beneath one score. Made she her way toward Merton Church, and entered there with many flounces that smacked far more of worldly pride than of humility and Christian grace. When the Parson reached the chancel, the first sight that seemed to catch his eye was Sarah. Then he quickly turned his glance another way, and for some moments did he seem hard to strive that he might keep straight countenance. Yet the look of satisfaction stole more than once into his face while read he the prayers. And Sarah took not her eyes from off him once until he, having spoke the benediction, had left the chancel. Then did she rise; and in same flouncing way she departed from the place, while at her gazed the other worshipers with wonder, albeit with broad smiles. That same even as I sat with

Sarah she seemed most kind toward me, and much disposed in truth to gain my favor. At length when she had stuffed me with her sweetmeats and cakes, she caused me to sit close by her, and glancing round, as if to full assure herself that none of the servants were within the hearing, she said in whisper, yet in much excited way:

"Dear Walter, dost thou know that of late there has come something o'er thy tutor?" I looked at her with much surprise, yet speaking not. Then she went on:

"Sure am I that good Master Hayden hath learned to look upon me with the eyes of favor. And, that I have received his glance with somewhat of graciousness, hath caused, I do believe, to him much joy. Hast thou not marked all this, dear Walter?"

With much of frankness did I explain that I had seen naught which might bear out what she had said. At this she looked at me with eyes that seemed to plead that I might remember such as had she great desire I should bear witness to. And then of a sudden into my mind there came the thought that 'twas from love of Parson Hayden, and not from madness, she had in such strange way of late comported her. And this same knowledge brought to me somewhat of relief, and I smiled. She seeing this, did no doubt assure herself that I had come to her way of thought in this matter.

"Now see I," cried she, "thou dost recall that of which I spoke—is't not so?"

"Nay," said I with firm shake of head. "Not yet have I beheld my tutor so much as once give to thee a look that he might not give any woman, or for the matter, any man as well."

"Then hast thou no eyes!" said she with angry glance, yet in an instant coming back to friendly tone. And went she on thus: "But art thou young, dear Walter, far too young to note such things. Yet have I said naught except the truth. And, dear Master Hayden, is he not a person of goodly bearing and appearance?"

"Yea, Sarah, he is well to look upon; yet must you remember he hath come of great family."

"Yet is he not poor?" she did demand with some sharpness in her tone.

"He is that, in truth!" said I.

Then I bethought me of the slender tithes of Merton parish, and as well of its clergy's liking to sit among the folk of quality. For might not proud Master Hayden have full contentment nor be at his ease, if by him at the board of great de Wycherly were Sarah, with her restless lips and most fantastic strivings after grace.

"Yet," did she urge, " am I far from the low state of poverty. Though may my people in times remote have been poor yeomen; yet living, as I have, the respected housekeeper of Merton Hall, have I been raised almost unto the plane of gentle folk? Would not he see the matter thus, dear Walter?"

"Were he, Sarah, like so many of his cloth, of birth below the gentle rank, thou mightest have hope; for parsons more than once have wedded ladies' maids."

At this did she toss high her head with much show of pride and say:

"And how far stand I above a lady's maid, who may not have, save her clothes, the worth of one coin of gold. For, Walter, have I what might be called a fortune." And then

she named a sum that did even cause surprise to me, who long had known she was possessed of much. "Dost thou not think that dear Master Hayden would well weigh my guineas in his mind?"

"Yet, Sarah, how shall he know that you have this sum? 'Twould surely not be modest to name the matter to him."

"Indeed, 'twould not be seemly of me so to do; yet, dear Walter, thou cans't say the thing to him. And wilt thou not do this for me?"

When I said that I would act as had she asked of me, she seized my hand with eager grasp, and well nigh in tears she begged me that I would go farther, and let the tutor know that he had the happiness to be beloved of my father's housekeeper. Was she full sure that I need but make small mention of this truth and he in eagerness would take the hint. So hard did Sarah in mad infatuation plead unto me, and with such labor did she throw aside the objections with the which strove I to block the path she was resolved to tread, that I at last yielded. And when I gave her promise that I would approach her beloved one in way she desired, she kissed me much and called down blessings upon my head.

Next day when came my tutor, I recalled how, by neglect through love of idleness or play, my lessons were unlearned. And deemed I this time most fitting for attending to the business with which Sarah had entrusted me. So, as I were asked some thing touching the tenses of a certain verb did I make change of subject by saying:

"Sir, have I been charged to make known to thee, by means of hints given in all delicacy, that Mistress Sarah Quick loves thee to point of madness, and is of firm belief that you as well do love her. And likewise is she most

certain that you will act quickly upon the strength of what I tell thee."

Then I named to him the sum of which the woman had declared herself to be possessed. He had at first harkened unto me in much wonder, and with his face suffused with sudden flush. But when I told to him the number of her guineas, I did note that there came into his eyes, for but an instant, a cold twinkle. Having fulfilled, as I deemed in most proper way, the trust imposed upon me, I made excuses to my tutor for having spoken thus, which had I done in answer to much entreaty. He said that I had acted well, but that it would be out of all reason for him to consider the matter. Then with much show of pride he went on to say:

"My birth, my position, and my noble friends, who by their firesides and at their boards do delight to welcome me, would join in forbidding the step, albeit such might bring to me some little wealth."

"Yet, sir," I went on, "you will find Sarah of most persistent kind, and not easy to be swerved from her set purpose."

After much time spent in seeming reflection within, and outwardly in biting of thumb, did he say to me that he would speak with Sarah, and strive to reason her out of her false hopes. So much time did he devote unto this weighty matter, that when he spoke to me once more as to the verb I were able to again foil him by modest hint that the time were late. Whereat did he nod his head and say that I had spoken well. Seized he his hat, and was making toward the door, when gave I to him reminder that, since he would see and reason with Sarah, the hour were fit, for I doubted not she were that same moment waiting

in expectation of him. But with shrug of shoulder and with look which bespoke some sense of dread, did he make intimation that 'twere his wish to put off the meeting with his charmer for yet another day. Scarce had he left the hall, when Sarah came and pounced upon me, as had I seen Tabby do on many a frightened mouse. As she demanded of me whether I had given to the swain her gentle hint, she did hold me fast. And when I had made reply that I had truly poured into his ear the tidings that she loved him much, she let me go. Yet though I made haste in hope of getting off, she swiftly came upon me, and holding me again in tight embrace, she asked when was it he had vowed he'd come to her. When I told her that 'twas my belief he would approach her on the morrow after lesson-time, she gave me kisses and released her hold upon my arms. But again did I make failure of attempt to place a door betwixt us, for pounced she on me as before, and bade me tell her that I was full sure, from joyful look upon his countenance, that he had no thought or wish to throw away his chance of happiness. At this I put on stubborn look and declared that I could say no more, save that since I had performed, as best it lay within my power, the mission which had been thus imposed on me, 'twas just that I should be free to go my way. When found she that I could be made to speak no further of the matter, she fain would be content with that I had already said, and gave to me my freedom.

Next day, while did my tutor hear me as I stumbled through a slow recital of my lesson, he seemed intent on other matters than our task. When came this same to end he sighed, and said that since he must needs have speech with good Mistress Quick 'twere well to have the

business through at once. And so he bade me seek her, and send her to him. I had no need to search for her far, for stood she at her door in trim attire, and showing much of agitation in her manner. With a hand upon her breast, as if to overcome the wildness of her heart, she made her way toward the lesson-room. 'Twas full two hours thereafter when I beheld the Parson leave the Hall, with lighter step than at his coming. Had I no wish to meet poor Sarah now, since I did deem her to be weighed down with the grief which she had brought upon herself. Nor did I see her till the even, when went I to the room sacred to her by virtue of her office of housekeeper. Was she seated in disconsolate way, with marks of tears about her swollen eyes. As she perceived me, there came an outburst of sobs; and when subsided these, she said:

"Dear Walter, have I this day known both joy and wretchedness of spirit; for kind Master Hayden doth love me—he doth indeed. Yet, alas, may he not wed me. I will tell thee why, Walter, if thou canst but keep thine own counsel of the matter. He has most unwisely contracted in secret a marriage; and is his wife yet living. And I must fear me there is little like that she, who holds the place that should be mine, will soon pass away. No longer have I the heart to serve thy noble father in the place I did so long fill well. I shall take my broken heart unto the home of my dead sister's son, who dwells in Sussex. There will I end my most unhappy days."

And when came the month to end, did Sarah take a last farewell of Merton, thanking with many tears Sir Philip for his kindness, and saying that she would in memory cherish me as if had I in truth been her own son. Parson Hayden rode with her on the first stage of her journey,

he having then occasion to attend upon some man of rank who dwelt within a mile of where she would make halt. Had we missed Sarah Quick not half a month, when the Parson said he must needs have a holiday; and for this purpose he journeyed to London. And there the good man did see fit to tarry a full month, while I as well had rest from studies. When came back my tutor, he wore upon his back cloth of great richness. Likewise had he new ornaments of gold; and on his finger was a ring of sparkling diamonds. All this, he said, came from a distant relative, who for a reason, wished that as donor he should not appear. Though to my boyish eyes the tale were truth, in wiser years I weighed it, as did I some other things of this odd romance which had I then in way mechanical observed. Had he but lied unto poor Mistress Quick about his pretended wife that he might soften her wounds of heart 'twould have been well enough. Yet, in that he did take advantage of her unwise passion for himself to obtain from her the means of making thus a brave show, I deemed his conduct as bringing shame upon his cloth as well as on his birth. Nor did Master Hayden come off scot free from all retribution for this sin. For oft there came from Sussex messengers, who would fain see the Parson; and I doubt not that these had been charged by the unhappy spinster to deliver unto him vows of her love that might not ever die. At times they brought him offerings of choice fruits, or fish, or game, and in the winter some knitted things which she had made with her own hands to protect against cold his ears and fingers. And did I gather that, in her haste to despatch these tokens with her messages of love, she had failed to provide the bearers with sufficient means for sustenance by the

way; and so was her victim forced, from his own purse, to make amends for her neglect. And more than once it chanced that he received from Sarah a letter, which was surely written for her by some other hand—for never could she boast command of pen. I doubt not that in these she spoke of love, and asked if his pretended wife were yet alive. And cursed my tutor in a way profane when he would break the seal and read the lines. Mayhap he was displeased at thought that the one who did write the letter for her, knew of things which by spread of gossip might yet reach the ears of they by whose favor he set such store.

IV.

SIR PHILIP'S VISITOR.

She who wore the keys of Merton Hall suspended from her girdle, after had come the reign of Mistress Quick to end, was Jane Edmunds, a widow who was full ten years older than my female tyrant, but was most pleasant in her disposition. When first she came, and showed me much respect, and would ask if the young master would have this or that, I did fancy that her way of treatment would in course of nature change at times, as had the other woman's. I looked to be reviled full oft for my shortcomings; and when weeks had passed while still she gave me kindly words and compliments, I were at loss to comprehend how this might be. And yet withal would she not humor me with surfeit of the sweet things she kept locked on closet shelves; but in this as in all things she did counsel moderation.

'Twas about the time of Mistress Edmunds' coming to the Hall that I first saw her who once had been the heiress of Squire Mowbray, and who, when disappointed in her desire of wiping off the debts of Merton, had brought her portion to Sir George Merryweather. That Knight had, after nigh to a dozen years of bickerings, left her childless. He had in this time wasted all of his own substance as well as hers. And so came it to pass that she was asked to dwell with her niece, Lady Clayton, at Clayton Hall,

albeit not to the pleasure of grim Sir George Clayton, who scarce ever showed himself unto his neighbors. Could Clayton Hall be seen from a certain hill which I was wont to climb? One summer's day did I ride far upon the back of Dick, the single work-horse at the Hall, my father keeping the black hunter for his own use, though I never knew him upon the fleet animal to follow hounds. When nigh to Clayton came there a thirst upon me, and I had remembrance of a certain spring within the gates, and some hundred yards aside from the avenue of trees that led up to the Hall. Sliding down from the back of Dick, whom I left to graze at his own will along the wayside, I hurried to the spring, where stooping down I took a long and pleasant draught. As to my feet I rose beheld I approaching from the avenue a lady. I would have made a swift return to Dick, but that I saw she did mend her pace as if she would have speech with me. And so I waited until she were nigh, when with uncovered head I bowed to her. Her figure, which was broad, was of peculiar squareness, and had she a face of much plainness, with hair that had begun to whiten. She smiled on me in much affected way, and said:

"Thou art young Master Wynnington of Merton, I do believe."

"May it please thee, madam," I made reply with low bow, "I am indeed Sir Philip's son."

"I knew it from the resemblance to your sire, whom I had acquaintance with in happier days. Kiss me, my boy."

Though unto this same thing I took not kindly, as did her face invite not like to her words, yet I now deemed it my full duty to yield to her request. So with blushes,

but I fear me with somewhat of an air of aversion, I softly touched her cheek with my lips.

"Nay, my boy," did she now exclaim, "thou lack'st in fervor." Then taking my head between her hands she caused me to kiss her full upon the lips. "That is more like it! What is thy Christian name?"

"Walter, madam," I made reply.

"Well, dear Walter, I am Lady Merryweather. Tell thy father that I would gladly see him—that he is sure of much welcome from all they of Clayton Hall. Kiss me."

Again did I with blushes touch my lips to hers, but wishing much meanwhile that I had elsewhere gone to slake my thirst.

"And we shall indeed be glad, dear Walter," went she on, "to have thee come often unto Clayton. Thou wilt find such books as I do vow thou hadst never yet beheld. And will I give to thee of cakes and sweetmeats thy fill. Kiss me."

This time, as I obeyed what seemed to me her most tyrannical command, there was, I do believe, a most unhappy look upon my face. She glanced at me with somewhat of surprise, and said as if she were speaking but to herself:

"Why, I will be bound he doth not love to kiss me. Strange boy, indeed! Yet do I like him, for hath he so great resemblance to his sire." Then placing her hand upon my shoulder: "Thou wilt come up to the Hall now, Walter, and see Lady Clayton."

"May it please thee, madam," spoke I with shake of head, "I should already be at home."

"Yet thou wilt come up for a little while, if only for

sufficient time to taste some sweetmeats, and a sugared cake I made myself this very morn."

"May it please thee, madam," said I, with blushes that this time came from thought that I were saying what were far from truth, "should I delay another moment I will be thrashed most soundly for the same."

"Yet at least, dear Walter, thou wilt come some other day?"

"If it please thee, madam, I will so do," I stammered, with a yet more crimson glow, for was I then in secret making solemn vow that I should not keep the promise.

"And what day shall I look for thee to come to me? Nay, I do see thou canst not name with much of surety when 'twill be. Well, let it be the first—the very first that shall be convenient for thee. Kiss me."

In fit of desperation did I now give my Lady a sounding smack upon the lips. Then bowing low, with much of briskness turned I on heel, and leaving her no doubt in great amaze, I ran swiftly from her presence, fearing meanwhile that she might call after me to return to her. When had I in safety passed the gates, and had found old Dick, I vaulted on his back. Then digging heels into his ribs, and with one hand on the reins, while with the other tugging wildly at his mane, I urged him to unwonted speed. Yet did I not, until the boundary of Merton had been passed, look on myself as safe.

Some days passed ere I found it convenient to tell Sir Philip that Lady Merryweather would have him come to her at Clayton Hall. Did I not deem it well to further mention that I likewise had received urgent request of the same kind, lest my sire, if it pleased him to go unto

her, should give me command to bear him company. After he had paid heed to my words and had given to the same the weight of some reflection, he smiled in an odd way, but said naught to me.

Went not my sire to Clayton Hall to see the Lady Merryweather, yet on the eight day came she to Merton. It was some few hours past the noon, and I was free, it being one of the times when had the Parson ridden forth in order that he might have pleasure of meeting some one of rank, who had been pleased to show him graciousness. I stood beneath a small chestnut tree that had been given chance to grow upon the lawn, and did sport with a frisky pup which had within the week been brought by an old tenant to the Hall. My sire sat in his large chair upon the porch, just without the open windows of his library, and well within the shade that fell beneath the long gray mansion wall, half hid as were the stones by the leaves of climbing ivy. An opened book lay on his lap, yet from the way his head hung down I deemed that he had dozed. While swung I round the pup, with teeth fast buried in my sleeve, I heard the sound of horses' hoofs. Then perceived I, as rode they up the avenue, a lady upon a roan horse, followed by a groom. A second glance showed me most truly that here was none other than Lady Merryweather. Then was I minded to take that means of disappearing which seemed the most convenient. Tearing my sleeve from the grasp of the pup's firm teeth, I quickly scaled to the upper branches of the chestnnut, and was hid among the leaves. Yet loath was the pup to part thus with its master, for frisked it round the roots, looking upward and barking much. As they came near

did my Lady perceive the small dog, and I heard her ask of the groom:

"What may be the kind of creature that yonder cur doth thus threaten?"

The fellow in a tone which did partake somewhat of surliness, made reply:

"Cats, my Lady."

Both then looked sharply at the branches of the chestnut, yet perceived no cat, nor caught a glimpse of he who was in hiding there. I did note that the horse she rode, as well as the groom's, were much poorer beasts than our Dick, and were their trappings old. Her riding habit was of faded look, while was his livery soiled much and rent. And did the fellow seem to think his attendance on her irksome, no doubt for reason that she was in measure a dependent on her niece, the Lady of Clayton, and thus entitled not unto his full respect. When he had dismounted, and had in careless fashion aided his mistress to alight, she made her way toward my yet dozing sire. It might be from her manner seen that she were well pleased to come upon him thus—since now she were assured full well of audience. As came the Lady Merryweather close unto Sir Philip, he was aroused, no doubt by sound of her short footsteps, and gazed he at her for an instant with look of much astonishment. Then did he cast aside his book, and springing up he made salute with courtly grace, of kind for which 'twas said he had in younger days been famed. To this she seemed to make acknowledgment in fitting way; and, in compliance of his wish, expressed no doubt, she took the seat he had made vacant for her use. Then with hands light-clasped, and bending o'er her he appeared to ask what might be her pleasure.

Though I could watch, from where I sat in hiding on the chestnut branch, their motions and much of their expressions, as if all these were in mere dumb show made and put on, yet did I not catch from distance aught of the meaning of their words. Each seemed to smile in pleasant way; and then, no doubt, they called unto each other's minds recollections of the days gone by. And soon their manner changed; for on her face was now a look of discontent, while did my sire seem to give expression of much sympathy. Once she glanced quickly at the groom, who would oft pull on the horses' bits in needless way and cry "whoa" in impatient tone. And then it were like she spoke of how the fellow was but little minded to show unto her the deference her rank deserved. At length her manner seemed to undergo another change, and there was something tender in her look, as if she were hinting, in way most delicate, and naming not the thing with bluntness of well-fitting words, that he might prove his noble nature in way most practical by making one, who had ever cherished him within her heart, my Lady of Merton. Yet to her glance did not Sir Philip make reply in kind. His look and manner much savored of respect, as he no doubt did fence in gentle way gainst her artful thrusts. At length she rose, as if to take her leave, while seemed he not in any way to urge on her to tarry there. Then in his courtly way he led her to the spot where stood her horse, and most gallantly did aid her in the mount. And meanwhile had he turned upon the offending groom a piercing look that caused the man to put off within an instant his careless way and to assume an air well suited to his place. And as the Lady Merryweather passed along she did nod pleasantly in reply to the salute

of parting which the Knight of Merton waved to her. Yet I did note when she was nigh my hiding place that in her look was much of disappointment; and I heard her sigh deeply. For some moments Sir Philip gazed after his departing guest; and then turned he upon his heel and walked slowly to the porch, where picked he up the discarded book with which he passed into his library.

Nigh to a dozen times thereafter came Lady Merryweather unto my father, telling him of trials, and seeking counsel of him; and no doubt with that tender look of hers giving unto him the hint, which he were never minded to take. Yet am I full sure that in these visits she were treated in the old courtly way and listened to with much respect.

Late in the winter which followed was that unhappy lady seized by sudden illness, which in two days' time carried her away. They bore her to Merton Church, where was her funeral; and went there my sire and his heir. As she were of the quality herself, the high families for miles around came to her burial. Lady Clayton made great pretence of lamenting at the loss of this her aunt, who 'twas well known she had looked upon in light of an encumbrance. While read good Parson Hayden from his book of prayers, as stood he above the coffin in the house of God, and while at the grave he did pronounce that unto dust had dust once more returned, was there upon his face a look that betokened much contentment, rather than small grief which would have been more fitting to the time. And oft would he glance round with his small eyes upon the gentle-folk he loved, and of whom he deemed himself as one, which was he truly in so far as went his right of birth and office.

V.

THE DE WYCHERLYS.

When were it Spring again, there came to dwell at Hazel Lodge, within a mile of us, the Baron de Wycherly, and his proud family. Had he taken for some months that place, while was his seat of Gorley Castle made well nigh over new, and much enlarged and beautified within. Though not many years gone, the fortune of this noble were counted small, yet had he thereafter, by favor of a great one that did for a time stand high at Court, been given hand in some transactions of monopoly on certain things which were much needed, and might be made in consequence to bring high price. And thus it came to pass that by the time his patron lost his favor at the Court, had the strong-box of de Wycherly been filled to overflow. The first time that the Baron came to Merton, had I just finished lessons, and was ready with my rod and line to start for Merton brook, to angle for the fish I had been told were seen to dart within. And had my tutor likewise been set free from what was to him a task as well, for did my lessons now of him demand much pains and study. As he passed out into the avenue I heard the Parson give exclamations of much pleasure. Turned I to see what might be the cause of this, and I beheld good Master Hayden rubbing well his hands and bowing low

before a short, broad gentleman of pompous mien, and decked in rich attire. Though did the stranger take as his just due the homage which was thus paid him, yet he seemed to look upon his worshiper in way that much savored of contempt. Having done sufficient honor of this sort unto the gentleman, the Parson turned and walked beside him toward the Hall; and meanwhile would he forward bend and twist his neck that he might gaze into the face he reverenced. As paused he in his seeming flow of compliments, his glance fell upon his pupil whom he beckoned to come to him. Though loath to delay, if only for an instant, my search for much desired fish, I laid down my rod and line, and striving hard to well conceal the displeasure which I felt at this ill-timed summons of myself, did I approach him. Then making toward myself one small nod, my tutor said:

"May it please thee, my Lord, to notice the heir of Merton." Then turning to me he went on in loftly tone: "Walter, thou art in the presence of my Lord, the Baron de Wycherly."

Did I bow low before the Baron, who patted me upon the shoulder and in gracious way, albeit with much of loftiness in voice and look, and said:

"Thou seem'st a good lad, Walter, and I trust that thou wilt look in some day upon our small Lodge. I have two sons, one nigh thy age. Henry and Paul may prove playfellows for thee. And have I, besides, the small lady, Maud, who mayhap will give thee bright glances that thou shalt long remember. And will my Lady de Wycherly give to thee much that will suit thy boyish palate. Thou will come some day to Hazel, wilt thou not, Walter?"

"Thanking you, sir, will I do this," did I make reply, again giving him low bow, "if so be my father shall see fit to give me leave."

"Will he most surely do that, Walter, for shall I make plain to him it is my wish that he send thee to us."

The Baron said this last in somewhat pompous way, and then, with the groveling guidance of the Parson, he passed into the Hall. Seizing quick my rod and line, I did haste across the fields in hope to make up wasted time ere I reached the brook. For then I minded little that there had on me an honor been bestowed in having thus been noticed by one of such rank. What to me was this de Wycherly, or all the peers of our great realm, their ladies, or their daughters, or their sons, when weighed against the fish I now did crave? Yet found I, this afternoon of Spring, that the things which we desire much, and do seek and follow after with much zeal, are apt to show more skill in the evasion than do we in the pursuit. For thus it was with one and all of the finny prizes which I then vainly strove to get. When toward the evening I wearily returned to the Hall, I astonished much Jane Edmunds by the largeness of my appetite at supper. The good housekeeper was in a flutter of spirits, due to what she deemed the honor paid to Merton by the visit of the Baron, and of which she did gossip much, in such like way as this:

"Of truth my Lord de Wycherly is most grand and lofty in his air, and to obey his proud commands were happiness. He doth seem to know and to presume full well on his high place. Strange has it seemed to me that good Sir Philip doth not bear himself more proudly—though of a truth the Baron could ne'er comport himself

with that easy grace which so well fits thy sire. Heigho, though many of us be not born gentle, some like I have privilege to dwell among the gentle. Soon will the Baron's sons have thee to play and feast with them at Hazel, and thou shalt see fair Maud, whom do they say is beautiful and growing more so every day. And mayhap the noble youths will come here to be with thee. Then will I make for them dishes that will be most fit, and confections for the which do all boys have longings. And might it chance they would remember Mistress Edmunds for the dainty things she would prepare for them."

Within a fortnight was word brought from Hazel Lodge to Merton Hall that upon the next day the young de Wycherlys would much pleasure find in giving entertainment to Master Walter Wynnington. The third hour past the noon, was the time named when they would look to see their guest. And from thence till nigh to midnight did Jane toil to render my best suit more fitting for the morrow's use. The cloth bore many marks of time and wear, which was in part removed by smoothings neath heated irons. And was the lace, which in some places had become much frayed, repaired by new pieces in most deft way. Likewise was my linen made to wear a newer look, while were the tarnished buckles on my shoes caused to shine once more. And of a truth Jane gave the improvement of her careful touch to every article of my apparel. So in the morning she spoke with old Joe, who was our groom, when were not the needs of our small garden calling for his time, and did impress full well upon his mind that poor worn Dick should be made to look at best when bore he Merton's heir to Hazel Lodge. And hours spent the old man in the cleaning and the rubbing down of the

poor nag, while were the saddle and the other trappings brushed and scoured to such extent as had these not known in many years. When came my tutor for our lesson his face beamed with a kindness which had he never vouchsafed to me afore. He made as if we would pursue our task in wonted way, and opened at its proper place the book. Yet had scarce a moment passed when he did pause, and began to dwell with much of fervor upon the high place among the folk of quality which was now held by the noble Lord, who had seen fit to summon me that day to friendly intercourse with his delightful offspring. Then touched he on the many virtues of Baron de Wycherly, and pointed out how might the favor and the patronage of him he lauded thus be turned to much account. Though listened I with outward show of due respect to this worldly lesson which the Parson read unto his pupil, yet did I pay small heed or thought to the words he spoke. When he withdrew, some little while before the hour of twelve, observing more than full half-holiday in honor of my visit to the folk whom he deemed so great, he did wish me, in all appearance of sincerity, joy and success. When came I to partake of an early meal before the putting on of my renewed attire, I found that scarce a dozen mouthfuls had been prepared for me. And did I ask our Jane if there were great lack of food within our larder. With a laugh made she reply:

"Have we plenty for thee, my Walter, if indeed thou shouldst care for it; yet did I not think thou wouldst ask for much, preferring rather to save thyself for the many goodly things which they will offer thee at Hazel."

And when was brought to me more food, I partook of this in quite sparing way, being minded to pay heed to

her good counsel, though in more reason than did Jane at first propose. When had been made complete my toilet to her full satisfaction, for had she been at pains to smooth out wrinkles and to see that naught set awry, or were like to twist from out its proper place, there came to me a servant who said Sir Philip had wish to see me in his library.

"Thy sire," exclaimed Jane, "is right to wish to see how brave his son doth look, when he goeth thus forth among the great. Full sure am I that he shall find delight in beholding how well I've decked thee out."

Yet when I came unto my father, did he pay small heed unto the fashion or the set of my attire, beyond remarking that he were pleased to note that I had shown a due regard for neatness. Then placed he his left hand upon my shoulder, and looking gravely into my face, he said:

"My son, to-day shalt thou enter the house of one who is deemed great. Of a truth is his rank higher than that, which by my Sovereign's grace is mine until I shall pass away, and which I pray God shall in all due time be conferred upon thee. Though thou art upon a lower plane than the de Wycherlys in point of rank, yet hast thou no need to abase thyself, for thou hast had sires who have stood with Kings. So shalt thou treat in all due respect thy elders, following in reason such wishes as they may be pleased to give expression of to thee. Yet shouldst thou not seem too desirous of winning favor. Bear thyself with courtesy unto the Baron's sons; yet when they have grown familiar, should they see fit to treat thee in haughty fashion, give no heed unto such airs. If thou shouldst deem thyself as not receiving treatment such as is due their guest, resort not to expression of thine anger, but

withdraw thyself at once, doing this with all becoming courtesy. Thou shouldst show a gentle and a high respect toward the Baroness de Wycherly, and in lesser way do all meet honor to the little lady thou shalt see, and minding ever that aside from attributes of grace and beauty, doth the very weakness of that sex give them good title to our chivalrous regard. Yet shouldst thou allow no one, from the Baron down, to induce thee to do any of those things which have I from thy childhood strove to impress upon thee as being unworthy of thy gentle blood."

Having perceived that I did in measure comprehend the true purport of that which he had said to me, my sire smiled pleasantly, and removed his arm from my shoulder, as if to make plain that I were now free to go. Made I my way unto the stable door, where I found Joe putting a final touch to the grooming of old Dick. And might that dumb beast have wondered at my unwonted appearance, due as it were to much cleansing of myself and trappings, as was the case with him. As I started to ride away called Jane after me to pause, and then she ran out to admire me as sat I upon the horse; and she did vow as well that Dick were now fit for any gentleman to go astride, were he even on his way to Court. And as I rode out through Merton's gates, I do confess I were conscious of some slight puffings out of vanity within me. Yet was all of this thing taken from out me when I came to Hazel Lodge. There upon the porch stood two finely-appareled and well-looking lads, the elder of about my own years, and as well one very pretty maid, whose age might be between that of the others. As I pulled up my nag, the three gazed at me for a moment, and then looking into each others' faces they burst out into loud laughter. And

I did note that the eyes of the little maid, while gave she up herself to merriment, shone and sparkled like as diamonds. Blushed I deeply, yet did I not feel sure that any disrespect unto myself had been intended. As I did alight from the back of honest Dick, saw I the Baron de Wycherly come out upon the porch. When he perceived me, cried he loud and sharply:

"John! John! Come hither! Where may the varlet be!" Then glancing pleasantly at myself he said, albeit somewhat in a tone of patronage: "Glad to see thee, Walter." And now to the lads: "What might be the cause of all this laughter I have heard? Surely thou wouldst not think to show discourtesy to our guest."

And then did come hurrying from round a corner of the Lodge, a young groom in spruce livery. As he took Dick's bridle-rein from me, looked he first at the animal and next at myself. Then smote he with left hand his leg and chuckled, shaking his head in rolling way as he led off my horse. Whereat the lads and likewise the girl gave way again to mirth.

"Come hither, Walter," said the Baron, and as I did ascend the steps to the porch, turned he to the elder lad: "I ask thee again, Henry, what is the cause of this merriment?"

The boy, now much sobered in his manner, made reply:

"Sir, could we not refrain from laughter since had the horse of this young gentleman so odd a look."

"Yet, my son, to thus laugh at that which may belong unto my guest is unseemly."

"May it please thee, sir," I now put in, "if thy sons did but laugh at my poor nag, has there no harm been done, since Dick hath no feelings to be wounded, no matter how

much sport be made of him. Nor can I look with reason for aught of beauty in him, since he is for the most part a mere work horse. Yet, now that my notice has to the thing been drawn, am I minded that of a truth our Dick, when polished up as he is to-day, hath a look that is most comic and laughable."

Whereat I did myself indulge in mirth, and in the same was I joined by the lads and maid, and as well by the Baron himself, who then made each of his children known to me.

"Master Walter Wynnington," said he with graciousness he had not shown toward me afore, "of an ancient family of Kent, shall know my children. My elder son Henry, so named most fitly as shall he be, when comes his turn, the head of the house of de Wycherly." With a lofty air had he spoke this. Then turning to his daughter with a gleam of proud affection in his eyes went he on: "This little lady is my Maud, and shall she be fit some day to wear a lofty coronet."

At this did Mistress Maud give slight toss of head, as if she gave full weight unto her sire's flattery. Then admiring her beauty, as none could fail to do, I made low bow unto her. It might be that in this act there was somewhat of the grace that should by right of just inheritance have come to me from Sir Philip. For did she of truth, with soft blush of pleasure, make recognition of me, while had her air now much of graciousness. And I did note that Henry looked upon me with more of favor. Was my notice brought to the younger brother, when the Baron nodding toward him said:

"Is this my younger son, Paul."

Yet did not his tone betray now so much of interest, as when he had spoken of his two elder offspring. I noted that Paul was not minded to reply in kind to my friendly words. In truth he did grin at me in far from pleasant way, and his eyes kept wandering over my attire. Then I made hazard of the guess that he were somewhat envious of me for the spruceness which good Jane had been at such pains to impart unto my garments.

As the Baron led me into the Lodge, I held well behind me in left hand my hat, of which in truth was I less proud than of the other articles of my apparel. Was I shown into a room that was adorned in a way of splendor such as my eyes had never seen. Seated in a chair, that did have about it much of carving saw I a handsome lady with hair somewhat touched by the softness of silver. Was she dressed in costly way, and I noted that her look were proud even to haughtiness. The Baron brought me nigh to her, and said:

"The Baroness de Wycherly sees before her young Master Walter, the only son and heir of Sir Philip Wynnington, who, as doth she well know, is of an ancient family of Kent."

Again did I bow, yet this time more low and taking greater pains than when I had been made known to Maud. My Lady smiled at me in pleasant way, yet with much of loftiness, and said:

"Am I glad to see thee, Walter, and do I trust that thy father, Sir Philip, is well."

"May it please thee, madam," I did make reply, "Sir Philip doth appear to be in best of health."

"That is well, Walter. Yet is it a pity he goeth not

more among his neighbors." Then giving a faint sigh, "I fear me he will never in full measure recover from the loss of your mother."

Next she began to ask me questions of myself—of the things I liked and did not like, though seemed she to pay little heed to the replies I made her. And meanwhile would her eyes seem to light upon my apparel, and travel quickly over this. When at length her questioning had come to end, the Baron gave me over to his sons to be entertained of them.

"Come with Paul and me to the play-room," said Henry, "and thou shalt see some rare toys."

Then gave I expression to thanks which in truth I did not feel, since I was loathe to leave the presence of Maud, and gazed I wistfully at the maid, with her long, fair hair and lovely face, in which were set lips of red, and dark blue eyes that sparkled. Did she perceive my regret at being taken from her, and for reward she smiled at me in winning way. The Baroness had no doubt perceived the look which had I cast at her daughter, since I did note a smile of some amusement on her face. Henry led the way to a large upper room, followed by Paul and myself, though the younger brother not once glanced at me save with that same peculiar grin; nor could he then restrain himself from eyeing my apparel. Yet did his elder brother seem already well inclined toward me; and found he much pleasure in showing me his toys, of which he had many of new and varied sorts, the like I had not dreamed of. Then was I minded of my own great poverty of such things. When Paul were urged to bring forth his own treasures that I might give these my admiration, he did this slowly, and as if grudging me the sight of them.

When at last I had seen and handled each of his toys, we played at games. And then was Master Paul minded to thwart me of success when chanced it in his power to so do. And likewise did he call attention, though not by means of so many words, to my lack of skill and ignorance of rules, yet never for the once to least unfairness. In truth were the cheating more largely done by him than by his better-minded brother. When we were wearied of the games, Henry proposed that we should go to the stables and see the ponies which had been given to him and Paul the week gone by. Yet when had we come to the play-room door, who should stand there but Maud herself. So pleased was I at sight of her that I did not for the instant perceive that her arms were filled with dolls. Said she in sprightly tone:

"I were sure that Master Walter would wish to see my dolls."

Whereat both Henry and Paul made protest, saying it were most foolish to suppose that such a boy as I were minded to pay heed to these silly things. Though had I ever looked with contempt upon such childish semblances of man and woman kind, yet now had I the wish to put aside for the once this dislike; and with that intent, I said:

"By your leave, young gentlemen, I would fain look at these same dolls, albeit I had never had a fondness for such things before."

Did Maud at this give a little laugh of triumph; and then told she in turn the name of each one of her small family, with some small discourse upon the tiny creature's qualities and history. While I looked at each with intent to show some interest, though paying small heed

to what was said concerning it, I was considering how much more deserving of my admiration was her own fair face. And would in truth my look wander from the doll to her bright eyes, on the which did it stay fixed, till in obedience to her I turned to the next of the little ones. And when she, having finished with the last and least loved of them all, turned to leave the room, she smiled at me both with lips and eyes, as if in thankfulness for having so paid heed unto her wish. And meanwhile had her two brothers waited in impatience, making in low tones remarks upon the folly of all dolldom. I craved of them pardon for having thus kept them waiting, and though looked the elder well disposed to forgive whatever of annoyance I had caused, did the younger seem by his manner to have for the guest a yet lower regard than before. The ponies were the finest that I had ever seen. Looked I on while the lads made trials of these, and did Henry offer to allow me a ride upon the back of his pony. This I made acceptance of with many thanks, and was much pleased with my ride. Yet did Paul not follow the example of his elder brother, being minded no doubt to keep his pony to his own use. Next we looked at the other horseflesh in the stables, and I did note that amid this poor Dick made but a sorry show. And presently there came in search of us a maid-servant, who said that the Baroness would have us come to her. We found that there had been spread for us a feast, which to my joy I found was to be graced by fair Mistress Maud. Was I seated opposite to her, and gazed much at her, though not thereby seeming to earn aught of her displeasure. Though my appetite were not large, while did she dispose of much good things, I strove to keep her fair company in the

matter of her eating by poking down my own throat food which I craved not. And betwixt bites I paid to her some attempts at compliment, which took she in good part, replying unto such with glances of some archness. The Baroness looked on, as likewise did her husband; and I noted that both seemed much amused. Mayhap it was my sprouting gallantry that caused their many smiles. The director of our feast was Maud's governess, a short and sprightly Frenchwoman whom they called Celeste. Would she bustle in and out of the room, smiling and chattering and shrugging oft her shoulders. Did Henry seem minded to give full attention to the feast, and of a truth was he then in famous appetite. And as well Paul kept his own counsel, while neglecting not his plate. Yet would he from time to time give me his odd grin, and cast his glance o'er my attire. And all save this younger son took kindly leave of me, when came the time for my departure and I went forth to mount old Dick, who was being held with needless grasp of rein by the spruce groom. As I rode away turned I in my saddle and with hat doffed, I waved a farewell salute unto my hosts, who stood upon the porch. And the last I did note of them was the bright and shining eyes of Maud de Wycherly.

VI.

MERTON HOSPITALITY.

When I had come to Merton our Joe was in waiting to take Dick, and did he ask me if they were not well pleased at Hazel Lodge with the way in which my horse had been groomed. Had I not the heart to relate to the honest fellow how the poor beast had provoked the mirth of all, from great de Wycherly down to the groom. So I put him off by saying there was no animal in all the stables of Hazel which showed such care and neatness as the one I rode there, and that the groom who took him from me had seemed much struck by his look. Scarce had I set my foot within the Hall when came to me Jane Edmunds, who gazed at me with admiration, paying the most heed to my dress. Then did she exclaim:

"Dear Walter, thou dost much credit to me, and right sure am I that thou wast well received at Hazel."

"That was I, indeed," I made reply.

"And I will be bound, Walter, that they gave praise to thy attire, which I did mend and furbish up so well. Is't not so?"

"Nay, Jane; they said naught concerning this thing to me—yet when I come to weigh the matter well, am I minded that in truth the younger son Paul could scarce keep his eyes from my apparel."

"Then is he a lad of taste. Right glad am I that he found pleasure in gazing upon my handiwork."

"Yet did he not look pleased. In truth, Jane, was his look one of downright displeasure."

"True—he envied thee—yet were it natural of him so to do. Poor lad, he hath no one to look after him as I do for thee. 'Twere not reason to suppose his lady mother would be minded to busy herself with such things."

Then she asked of me further questions touching my visit, and did the splendor of the house which I had made entrance to impress her in mighty way. With open mouth and with awe in her look listened she to my answers. And noting this could I not resist the Tempter's hint to make embellishments. Yet did the things which were unreal appear to her the most real, and seemed to cause the good woman the greater joy. On the morrow when my father sent for me, and I came to him in his library, I did make my account of the yester doings with far more of truth, giving naught proportions greater than had such to my own eyes held; and yet dwelt I not then upon the charm of Mistress Maud that had so deeply impressed me.

"Thou wast well treated, my son," Sir Philip said, "I did deem it as not impossible that they should in loftiness of pride forget what was thy right, as such as they have been known in past to do." Then with a shake of head: "Yet thou needst not look ever for so much of consideration at their hands. And must their hospitality have some measure of return; so will I ere many days send for the two lads to come here to thee at Merton."

"And, sir," exclaimed I with much of eagerness, "wilt thou not when thou mak'st invitation, ask that there shall also come hither Mistress Maud—and—her governess."

"So, so, my Walter." Was there an odd smile on my sire's face, and a twinkle in his eye, as he went on: "And dost thou think then those lads of de Wycherly's would find less pleasure in their visit to us, if came not their sister with them?"

"I do not think, sir," said I with much of blushing, and with confusion in my manner, "'twould be so very much for their joy that I would wish their sister here."

"Then hast thou, Walter, an admiration for this maid, whom did Parson Hayden say was passing fair?"

"Sir, she is in truth as hath my tutor said; and have I indeed an admiration for her," I now declared right boldly.

"An early admiration such as this is not like to last; but while it doth so do 'twill cause thee naught of harm. Yet is it not well that she be asked to come here, since, even were the invitation made, sure am I the Baroness would not permit this thing. So thou shalt possess thyself in patience, Walter, until they shall in turn again summon thee to Hazel."

Some weeks were flown ere Sir Philip was minded to send for the Baron's sons to come to Merton. And did Jane in fond anticipation of the visit cause the servants to cleanse and garnish every room within the Hall which the noble youths were like to enter. And did she again with her own hands brush and cleanse and overhaul what she no doubt considered as my gay apparel. Likewise prepared she such dishes and confections as she deemed would be pleasing unto my guests. On the day of the coming of the de Wycherlys Master Hayden wasted no time upon the learning of his pupil, but did he devote

himself to telling me how I should strive to gain the friendship of the young gentlemen who tarried at Hazel Lodge. And when came the pair riding up the avenue upon their sleek ponies, the Parson ran forth to give them welcome, I being held back by good Jane, who was giving completion to her work of grooming me by rubbing down a most stubborn crease upon my sleeve. When did I at length gain freedom, and went out upon the porch, was my tutor ushering the guests up the steps with look of vast respect. And in his homage to the lads did he seem to grovel only less than had I seen him do before their haughty father. When had I chance to speak with them I perceived that Henry seemed full minded to respond with kindred warmth unto my greeting. Yet did his younger brother reply to me with much of coldness in his mien, and wore he a look as if he found no pleasure in his visit. While was Master Hayden yet hovering around them, and striving much to gain of them the eye of favor, came forth Sir Philip, who in easy way gave them welcome, and asked concerning their sire's health and that of their mother. And was there in his manner somewhat of that courtly grace which did so well upon him fit. I did note that Henry, and in some measure Paul, gave expression of respect and liking for my sire. And now there swiftly fell upon my tutor a bitter disappointment. Up the avenue, upon an old horse dripping foam from nostrils, rode a lad who wore a troubled look. In our rustic form of speech did he cry out that his granny, old Gammer Jasper, was at death's door, and that she would fain have consoling words from the mouth of the Parson, else could she not pass hence in peace. There came into

the good man's face a look which to me seemed in truth to smack of great annoyance; nor did this clear away when Sir Philip said to him:

"While thou art with the Gammer, wilt thou not see if there be aught that I may do for her?"

Then my father led our guests into his library, while I tarried for a moment watching the Parson, who would gladly have made excuses for not going unto the dying woman, yet finding none well suited to his need. Then did I hear him in low tone utter a curse, after which strode he up to the horse and pushing back from the rude saddle the lad, who gazed fearfully at him meanwhile, he mounted. With look of much displeasure and in snarling tone bade he the lad to hang on, and rode away. Then I joined my guests in the library, where my father seated in his large chair was asking them touching their studies. They did speak, and in tone of small respect, of their tutor at Gorley, whose time was now much given to looking after the changes which were being made about the Castle. And meanwhile had they holiday, which, they made admission, was far more pleasing to them than were lessons. Next did Sir Philip cause them entertainment by relation of certain amusing events of his own boyhood. At length Sir Philip made intimation that 'twere now my time to play the host, and I began the same by showing the few battered toys which I possessed. I did not this thing from any wish to make display, but rather that I might render plain to them how much more had they been favored of fortune than myself. And in truth did the sight of my poor treasures bring a smile into the face of Henry, while Paul gazed upon them with the self-

same grin as when his glance would rest upon my attire. And now broke there on me a light. Perceived I at last that his displeasure touching my apparel had not been brought about by envy of the same, but by reason that he held this as of most common kind, as were my toys. I did reflect that in truth my clothes, in point of richness of texture and in the fashion of the make were no match beside those of Paul or of Henry; yet deemed I that upon the score of neatness, thanks to the labors of Mistress Edmunds, my dress stood superior to theirs. Next did we pay visit to the stables, where Joe was grooming the two ponies, at which was he in act of gazing with much of wonder and of respect as well. The lads had another laugh at old Dick, who minded them not one whit; yet did they both show somewhat of admiration when came they to look upon my sire's black hunter. Then played we at games upon the lawn, in which Paul, as if by accident, gave me more than once a sly trip. Presently came summons to us from Jane, who did receive the guests with much of courtesying, and with large flow of flattery. Seemed they at first much minded to laugh and make jest of her well meaning words; yet when they came to taste of her cookery, which was this time in truth far better than 'twas her wont to lay before me, the lads gave expression of their pleasure; and did they now look upon her with somewhat of respect. When came the time for their departure, did I beg of them that they would remember me with all due respect unto their sire and my Lady, and as well—I made addition with a blush—to their fair sister Maud. Whereat Paul said with face of much gravity:

"Maud did send a message to thee by us."

I asked with eagerness what might this message be.

"She said," made he reply, " 'tell Master Wynnington that my dolls be well.' "

"Indeed she said naught of the kind," put in Henry, with somewhat of sharpness in his tone.

As they were in readiness to mount their ponies, which were held without by Joe, Sir Philip came and joined me in saying farewell. Though did he, when they had rode away, return to his library, I remained beyond the steps, pondering on what might be the time which were most like to pass ere I should again be summoned to Hazel Lodge. Scarce had the young de Wycherlys passed from out my view, when heard I the noise of some one speeding swiftly. I glanced around and beheld Master Hayden, somewhat jaded of aspect, running along like an old hound intent upon his search for fleeing fox. Had he thus on foot run cross country from the death-bed of Gammer Jasper, in hope that by the shortness of the path he might come upon the noble lads in time to pay them yet more of his court. Much lacking in his breath, he paused and asked of me:

"Are they yet here?"

"Nay, sir," I did make reply. "Yet are they little more than out of sight, and if thou shouldst pursue them at the speed thou hast made till pausing to ask of me, thou shalt o'ertake them before they come to Hazel."

Then without so much as making to me answer touching the condition of the Gammer, turned he on heel; and much panting, and no doubt with inward curses, the good man strode away.

VII.

ENCHANTMENT.

Did I soon thereafter begin to watch with much of eagerness for the coming of the message that would give me title to again enter, without show of presumption, the place where dwelt fair Mistress Maud. And when at last I received one day the joyful tidings that I were bidden to visit on the morrow with my youthful friends, I was seized with fit of restlessness, which caused the hours to seem most long of passage. And in truth when I did stretch my limbs upon my couch, could these not stay where I had placed them, but would twitch and thrash about, while would my body roll from side to side in vain attempt to find position which would bring to me some rest. 'Twas long past the hour of midnight when I ceased to wonder if sleep would come unto me before the dawn. Once I dreamed that I were walking by side of a small and shadowy pony, upon the back of which rode Maud; yet I noted that she did lack her fairness and her shining eyes, while had her features grown much like those of Paul. And she gave his same grin and looked at me in his way. Then woke I in gratitude to know that had come no such change upon fair Maud; and dropped I off again in slumber with the pleasant thought that the hours were few ere I should behold her once again. Had my tutor gone upon a visit of some days to a certain

Knight, whom he did deem as worthy of his high regard, and I were now left to study by myself. And in truth had then his guidance grown to be of small avail to me. Yet, when in the morning I looked into my books, could I not upon the lessons fix my wandering thoughts.

After I had dined in small and frugal way, and had dressed with much of care, was I seized upon by Jane Edmunds for my inspection and a final smoothing out. Then mounting old Dick, whom had Joe made to look as clean and spruce as on his first visit to the stables of quality, set I out in right joyful frame of mind. When rode I up to Hazel Lodge, I saw no one upon the porch; and it seemed as if my poor nag were not to receive his due attention in the way of mirth. As I did alight I saw coming toward me the groom, who had before taken care of Dick. Yet was he not this time minded to show merriment, for was his face grown long, and was there a look of sourness upon it. And when I spoke in pleasant tone unto the fellow, he made acknowledgment of this in most gruff form. Likewise was he harsh to Dick as he were leading the poor beast away. As I mounted the steps did the oaken door swing back and a man-servant in new and shining livery appeared. He beckoned to me, with more command in face and gesture than had I been wont to see in fellows of his condition, that I should follow him. And did I this in all obedience, with hat behind me held in left hand. Then was I shown into the grand room which I had seen afore. Here perceived I the Baroness de Wycherly, seated with some fine needlework in her lap. Was there a cold look in her proud face when first she glanced up at me. Then did I pay respect with bearing full as gallant as might be looked for in one of

my years, and to the which she replied with smile of some little graciousness. Then with a motion that I might sit, she said:

"Pleased am I to see thee again, Master Wynnington."

For this sign of good will I gave her thanks and took the seat which had been offered, while went she on with her needlework, in which did she seem to take much of interest. There sat I for some moments, that did in truth seem long to me, and watched my Lady as she quickly moved the needle and the threads with her white fingers. And meantime I wondered much if Maud were like to make appearance soon, though not daring to ask her mother touching this matter. As naught was said farther to me by the Baroness, did I not deem that I had warrant for speaking unto her, engaged as she was thus busily. Hence did I sit in silence, yet finding no enjoyment in being thus within a fine room, where no heed were given me. At length there came the Baron de Wycherly, who in way of much loftiness did nod to me as I rose and bowed to him. Then he asked how might Sir Philip be, and when I had assured him of my sire's good health, he said:

"How it is, Walter, that thou art not with my sons? I thought surely that thou wast to be shown to their play-room where they would strive to give thee some fitting entertainment."

"May it please thee, sir, naught was said to me of this; yet as I do know the way leading to that same apartment, I shall by your leave make bold to go thither."

"Thou art right, Walter," the Baron said, descending somewhat in his loftiness, "and I do trust that thou wilt be treated by my sons as is thy due."

When had I again shown right measure of respect unto mine elders of that house, I passed through the hallway and up a staircase, moving not hastily, which would have been unseemly. Yet did I linger more in hope that I might along the way chance upon bright Mistress Maud, than from regard of proper manners. Though I loitered much came I too soon upon the play-room door; and without the same I paused yet a moment. As there came along no beauteous maid with armful of rich dolls did I knock on the door. And was this opened by Henry, who greeted me in way pleasant enough, albeit his thoughts seemed full intent on other things; while from Paul I had no more than distant nod; and did he as well have his mind elsewhere than upon his guest. When had the door been closed with care by the elder brother, he looked at Paul as if he would have his counsel touching some matter. Then the younger said in tone which had some measure of a snarl:

"Of course we need not stop for him—sure am I he would not tell."

"Thou wouldst not tell upon us, Walter," said Henry to me.

"Nay," made I reply, "of a truth I may not tell of things concerning which I know naught. Yet as to that hath my sire impressed it on me that 'twould be mean and wrong to bear tales of what my companions do."

At this did Paul drag out from behind a chest the headless trunk of a large doll, together with the missing top, and the rich apparel of this most ill-used creature. Then the rogues with sharp knives hewed off the legs and arms; and next after much stabbing to the heart did they quarter up the trunk. And had they now naught left to give

them joy, save only to tear into small shreds the garments of their victim. And did I watch this cutting up, and sundering of threads, with most keen delight, albeit I were of full belief that the mimic creature had been beloved of Maud. Had I but chanced upon the pair before the mischief were begun, I might have striven to save its life for its mistress, even to length of battling for the same. Yet, since I could not do such service for the fair one, could I at least make to them a hint the which might bring to her fit recompense, and so I said to them:

"The creature was, I will be bound, well on in years; and doubt I not the brothers of its mistress will at first convenient time procure for her another, of fairer face and finer garb, than did possess the poor dismembered one."

Whereat both lads gazed at me with face of wonder, and then with somewhat of a blush, said Henry:

"Yes, Walter; we will do the thing thou hast named—unless we should have for our money some more pressing use."

But did Paul break out with laugh that grated on my ears; yet not minding such I put this question to the pair:

"How came it about thy sister knew not that her doll were gone?"

"Ill," said Master Paul with no intent of wasting words.

"Indeed she hath much aching and throbbing of her head," did Henry explain, "and thus is she forced to pass the day in lying down."

Whereat I uttered a most deep sigh, which led Paul to look at me and grin; yet did not the elder brother seem to note the way in which had I expression given of my disappointment at this knowledge. And so, I thought,

would this visit, for the which I had longed so much, be not lighted for one instant by Maud's bright eyes. I gave no heed unto the council that the brothers now held as to how they might dispose of the fragments, which might tell of their youthful iniquity. At least were these put together, and for the present hid behind the chest. In our sports which followed, first within the room and next out upon the lawn, I found no pleasure, nor did I mind the pranks of sour Paul, albeit were these of more annoying kind than had he tried before. When at last sat we down at our small feast, came not the haughty Baron and my Lady to look upon us; nor did the French governess show once her face. When was brought to me word that my nag awaited me without, I bade farewell to the two lads in most gloomy way and left them, not minding that their father and their lady mother had this time given me small notice. Yet was my wretchedness turned of a sudden into joy; for as I were about to place foot in stirrup there ran out unto me fair Maud, with winning smile and sparkling eyes, and withal most neatly decked out and fresh of air. She made in soft voice excuses that she had not seen me till then. Was there in her look that which told that she perceived I did gaze at her in way of worshiper. The while was my conscience just enough unto me to give reminder with some small twinge that had I found pleasure in watching the destruction of her loved doll.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "how the pains did shoot like small arrows through my head; and I felt so ill, while Celeste strove to soothe me. Yet when I knew 'twas time for thee to leave did I gainst all protest quick arise. And am I right glad to see thee again."

And she glanced so sweetly at me then that I could have flung me on the ground and kissed the dust before her feet. Yet all I did was to bow, and in way of much confusion to say:

"And was my sorrow turned to very joy when thou cam'st forth to me."

Then she made much of old Dick, patting him and laying her soft cheek gainst his bending head, while did the stupid dolt show no sign of happiness. And when at length had I mounted and the nag had started at a walk, I turned my bared head and gazed after her so long as I could see her shining eyes. Filled to the full with joy was I, as homeward I did permit the nag to amble at his own pace. And I sat that same even with wandering thoughts, and no doubt with smile of pleasure on my face, while Jane did gossip much and question me touching my visit. Unto her I made dreamy answers, that at times strayed from the point. On the morrow when my sire spoke with me he nodded much as I told him how I had been received with far more of coolness than when first I went to Hazel.

"'Twould be no cause for wonder, Walter," he said, "if thou shouldst yet receive courtesy more scant from them. Yet like I the way of the elder son. Is he in truth of right sort. And do I note thou tak'st not to heart the neglect of the proud Baron and my Lady; for is thy present look a cheerful one."

"Sir, I have not told thee all," I said, much blushing.

"So—so, my son, and didst thou after all see the little lady?"

Whereat I told him of the ending of this my second visit to the de Wycherlys; and gave he expression of some

amusement as he watched me with closeness. Then shaking, first his head, and then his finger at me, he went on:

"From what thou hast already told me, Walter, am I of belief that she will not act always thus to thee. And wilt thou as well change toward her ere they leave Hazel for great Gorley Castle."

Albeit listening with show of due respect unto Sir Philip's words, I did not then give them just weight, since I deemed it as out of reason that Maud should ever change toward me. Yet came the time, in course of not many weeks, when I did with much of clearness have perception of his wisdom. For the present went I about in way of moon-calf; and did I give thought to little save the beauty and the grace and charm of my young enchantress. Would I go cross country with stealth of fox, and then in agile way of squirrel speed to the upper branches of a lofty tree that did overlook at some distance the lawn of Hazel. And perched there would I for hours wait and watch for Maud. If by any chance came she within the range of my sharp eyes, put I these to much strain that I might see her but the plainer. And would I meanwhile in low voice speak tender words that gave a full expression to my thoughts. For did this same talking unto ears which heard him not cause to the wight who uttered the silliness much of relief. And oft would it come to pass that I had perched at tall tree top, and had watched in vain for the fair one's coming. Though in no way grudging the long hours wasted thus, would I upon the earth alight with dreary thoughts, and homeward steal. And whenever I were bidden to Hazel, did Maud bear herself toward me in most pleasing manner, knowing in her heart no doubt the great esteem and admiration which I had for

her. And for sake of her did I have kindly feeling toward her sire, and as well for her brother Paul, albeit were the lad's pranks of most vexing fashion. Yet were it not for this cause alone that I had fondness for her elder brother, since had Henry some most pleasing ways, and had he ever borne himself toward me with show of consideration. For all this did he and I once come to blows. Had Master Hayden gone upon a long journey and I were given holiday for some weeks. Then one day had I by agreement met the young de Wycherlys to fish with them at a point in the brook midway betwixt Merton Hall and Hazel Lodge. Yet did the fish seem to have some warning of our design, for came they not nigh our hooks, albeit had we full well covered these with bait of tempting look. At length Paul gave up his seeking after fish, and strove by means of stones thrown into the brook to splash me. To this paid I no heed, while he strove yet the more to give to me annoyance. When he perceived that these things were little like to move me, he made resort to taunts.

"Indeed art thou a pretty Knight's son—hast thou scarce a toy," he said, "and what thou hast is so worn and old that it were of no use, save to kindle fire."

"And yet, Paul," made I reply, "I in all thankfulness may say that I have friends with rich toys, who in kindness do give me leave to see and play with such."

"I do call that beggarly," went he on with a sneer. "Fine apparel hast thou indeed. The old-fashioned things thou wear'st be as much cause for laughter as that aged and ill-looking nag of yours. And shalt thou be never rich, for thy father's estate is burdened with large debts which thou must pay. A pretty one thou to make eyes at our sister."

"Paul," broke in Henry, "thou should'st not speak in this unseemly fashion to our friend. Ashamed am I of thee for such words."

Yet was not the younger brother minded to pay heed to the elder's counsel. Did he rather in sudden way and with somewhat of fury spring at me, and upon me rain quick though feeble blows. Had I intent to do no more than throw from me the angry lad, yet I much misjudged the strength I used, for I sent him over backward into the brook. As rose wet Paul upon his feet and came to dry ground, he wept in childish way, and declared that I had meant to make an end of him. And now did Henry look at me in angry way, and cry:

"Hadst thou no right to do that savage thing unto one smaller than thyself. Yet shalt thou in me have one in size thine equal!"

Whereat he sprang forward quickly and gave me a blow with open hand across the breast. Then went we at each other with our fists, for were I not minded to brook this insult. Were we alike in strength as well as stature, and so the battle were long and stubborn. Had Paul once made as if he would attack me from behind, yet did his gallant brother halt our conflict for the moment and bid him with threats to stand aside and give him no aid or encouragement by word or deed. Then went the battle on as fiercely as afore. And did we pummel each other with our young fists till trickled down from our nostrils small streams of blood, while were we swollen round about the eyes. Still would neither he nor I show sign of yielding to the other. Yet came it to pass that both at length were forced by weakness and by want of breath to pause. And panting much did we gaze at each other, with full

knowledge that so equal was the match betwixt us that in truth might neither hope to prove the better. Then the gallant Henry reached out his hand to me in friendly way, and did I grasp this in quick and warm response. With that we parted, speaking not one word, for had we for such purpose scarce sufficient breath. When my father beheld me, and had from my lips truthful account of the small fray, he chided me not, nor said ill word of the Baron's heir. Yet Jane bewailed my bloody smears and swellings, and wondered much at the cruelty of Henry de Wycherly in so inflicting marks upon myself. Yet when I had made it clear to her that my brave rival in the strife, whom I did now esteem more than before, had come to Hazel with full as much of blood and bruise upon his face as had I brought to Merton, good Mistress Edmunds saw fit to smile, and she said the honor of our house were safe.

It was not long thereafter when it came to my ear that the renewal of Gorley Castle had come to completion, and that within a fortnight the de Wycherlys would go thence to dwell. Filled was I with sadness at the thought that I should no longer have chance to behold fair Maud, even from my perch upon the tall tree-top. Did my last meeting with her ere she went from Hazel come about by chance. Having gone one day some little past the hour of noon unto my watch tower, in hope of gazing from the distance at my enchantress, waited I full long in vain. Then came into my head the thought that I would greatly wish to place a kiss on her soft cheek at parting. Yet did it not seem to me that I could thus make bold with her. Had it chanced the year before, that as I were walking homeward late upon a summer's day, there came along

bright Nancy Brooks, the bouncing daughter of a farrier who dwelt hard by. Were her cheeks full and of the redness of a ripened peach; and as she did approach to pass me by she seemed not to pay me heed, but kept her eyes in way demure upon the ground. And was there a look of such freshness in her face, that when swiftly there came on me the thought to taste her lips was I not minded to oppose the wish. So thrusting my head beneath her neat black hood, I kissed her full upon the lips. Whereat did she, albeit without glancing in my eyes, make me a courtesy and say:

"Thank you, good Master."

Then went she on her way, with same demureness and with eyes upon the ground, as if naught had took place out of the common run of things. Yet as I did recall this, while waiting in the tree, were I in truth of full belief that Maud de Wycherly would not so kindly take to such a freedom as had Nancy Brooks. When at last with much of sighing I gave up the hope which had brought me thither and slid to the ground, I heard a cry and then beheld close at hand Maud herself with look of fright in her face. Yet when she perceived that it were but myself, who had thus alarmed her by coming in such way adown the tree, she laughed. And with most arch look she asked of me:

"How came you, Walter, to climb this same tree? Was it to seek bird-nests?"

"Nay," did I reply to her with blushing cheeks, "I climbed in hope of seeing thee."

Then she said with artful pretence of alarm that she hoped I would never break my neck for wish of seeing her. Next with a pout did she bemoan that she could find no

wild flowers, the search for which had brought her alone into the wood gainst the command oft given of her lady mother. Whereat made I offer to search upon the morrow high and low that she might have a nosegay to her taste. Then did she say she were not minded to give me so great a task, and with a sigh added that she were soon to leave dear Hazel. And she bore herself toward me in such gracious and winning way that were I well nigh beside myself. Of a truth for one moment was I not master of myself. And heedless of what I had thought about this same matter while in the tree-top, I did throw my arms around Maud and kiss her upon the cheek. Then too late I perceived that I had done rashly, and released her in speedy way. With her eyes ablaze, and with scorn in her look, she exclaimed:

"Thou clown! How dost thou dare in such familiar way to treat one who is so much above thee?"

"Most humbly do I crave thy pardon, Mistress Maud," said I with much of humility, "the thought to do this did come most suddenly upon me."

"Will I never grant thee pardon," went she on. "And I do much wonder at such boldness toward the daughter of a Baron who doth stand most high within the County, and who hath much of wealth. And then to think this hath come from the son of a Knight well nigh penniless—from the heir to few acres and many debts. Have we indeed sent for thee to come to Hazel for naught but to laugh at thee for thy old-fashioned and patched attire, and thy odd ways of speech." Though made I no reply, yet her cruel words cut most deeply. Next she changed her note to one of reproach, saying: "Thou didst make most cowardly attack on my small brother, for the which

might my elder brother have repayed thee most well in kind had he not pity for the clumsy way in which thou didst oppose him. And 'twas thou who didst incite my two brothers to destroy in wicked cruelty my most beloved doll, the Lady Nell, whose place may none other take." Had I not even heart to make denial of this thing. Did she reach conclusion of her tirade thus: "And for these things, clown as thou art, do I hate thee. So do I pray that the sight of thee shall anger me no more."

Then with parting sneer did she turn from me and flounce away. With a sense as if of wounds about my heart I hastened on till the fall of night, minding not which way I went. Then worn and weary, came I to Merton, and avoiding worthy Jane, I crept supperless to bed.

VIII.

THE GUEST AT HILLGATE.

Though did the wounds which came from Maud de Wycherly's sharp words seem at the time to be most deep and of a deadly kind, yet to my wonder these in some few days began to heal. I chanced upon the way to meet her brother Henry, well nigh a week after I had received the hurt, and from his manner was I of the belief that he had some small knowledge of what had passed betwixt his sister and myself. Was he now most intent to show consideration unto me, and to spare my feeling. Did he hope that we might yet see each other more than once, albeit he made no hint that I might find welcome at Gorley. And when we parted he offered me warm grasp of hand and kindly glance. By holding mastery o'er my countenance did I prevent Jane Edmunds from gaining knowledge of Maud's change of bearing toward me. Had I then given expression of my wounded state, would it have caused the good woman much of pain; and would she no doubt in strivings toward the soothing of her Walter, have many times brought to him reminder of that which he with some effort were striving to forget. Yet did she much wonder that I was not bidden to Hazel for a final leave-taking. It chanced that I did not again have speech with Sir Philip till the day but one after the departure of the de Wycher-

lys. Then looking into my face in his searching way, he asked: "Dost thou miss thy noble friends, Walter?"

"Sir," I did answer, "glad am I that they are gone to Gorley Castle, though had I some liking for the Baron's heir."

"Didst thou say heir, or heiress, Walter?"

"Told I truth, sir, when I said heir."

"So—so," Sir Philip said with knowing look. "Then hast thou been disenchanted—for do I read with much of clearness upon thy countenance that the thing I named to thee as like to come to pass has of a truth been full accomplished, and within the time I set. Will I ask no question touching the manner in which this change was wrought, if so be thy heart yet bleeds."

"Nay, sir, it be now as whole and sound as ever." And having said this, did I without the need of urging give to my sire true account of that my last meeting with the cruel Maud. When had I come to end was there somewhat of amusement in Sir Philip's look.

"Of a verity," he said, "are these de Wycherlys a high family, and has this present Baron gained much wealth. Is he the second Baron of the house. Was the first summoned by reason of certain precious services rendered to a great man, for whose sake had he made most treacherous abandonment of a patron who had ever used him with great kindness. Was the first Baron by all report of common stock, and was the name de Wycherly assumed. The real name, which have I forgot, had no high sound. Nor was old Gorley Castle his family's ancestral seat, as I am told he would have it to seem. And is the proud Baroness of high birth—upon her father's side. Were he indeed a great one, albeit was the mother lowly born,

though of much beauty. Nor did the sire and she deem marriage rite as of their pressing needs. Do I not tell all this to thee, my son, for love of gossip, to the which am I but little minded. Yet would I warn thee, Walter, that in such as these de Wycherlys wilt thou see much of o'erweening pride. And mayhap, when they have strove to humble thee by high words and airs, it shall soothe thy feelings to recall, that though the Wynningtons were never more than Knights, yet Knights have they truly been from Hastings to Armada's days."

'Twas the year thereafter that there came an old soldier of Fortune to tarry with Sir Harry Bullard of Hillgate. This latter were in truth the self same Knight whom Baron de Wycherly had through Parson Hayden urged upon my sire to join in treating with contempt and rigor for reason that he were by birth and faith a Catholic. This soldier bore the name of Don José de Madura, and was a cousin of Sir Harry's wife. Did he limp much by reason of a wound, made by musket ball, upon his ankle. Of estates had he none, nor had Dame Fortune made him from her bounty more than slight recompense for his years of service. And had the little which did come into his hands by right of plunder, been most quickly and freely wasted by him. And so was he now driven to subsist on what his kinsmen and friends might be minded to bestow upon him. When first I beheld Don José was old Dick enjoying the rare pleasure of ambling beside the black hunter, on which sat Sir Philip. Passed we, coming from the other way, Sir Harry and his wife's kinsman; and with both did my sire make exchange of courteous salute. Don José was attired in way of some splendor, albeit were his gilt greatly tarnished. I noted that his sallow face bore mark of a

sabre thrust, and in part seemed covered with short white bristles. When were the pair out of our hearing, did Sir Philip say to me:

"Sir Harry's guest, have I been told has seen many lands, and hath much learning. Would he in truth make a fine tutor for thee, my son."

Though said I naught, yet in my heart was I by no means grieved at thought of exchanging the Parson for another tutor. And was there that about the stranger which had caught my eye. Then came the thought that at odd whiles 'twould be better to listen unto tales of fierce doings in strange lands, than to my own tutor's most wearying recital of the smallest ways and doings of the noble ones before whom had he much groveled. Some few days thereafter when came I out upon the highway, after a ramble near Hillgate, I saw Don José limping slowly along, yet with somewhat of swagger. Was he coming from the other way, and when I were nigh him did he dart at me an angry look from out his small black eyes, and at same time he gave the stout stick he bore some small flourish. Was there surely in my face expressed somewhat of my wonder that he should glance at me in such way, since had I done naught to merit his dislike. Yet I made to him salute in respectful way. Then he looked at me with somewhat of favor and paused, which did I likewise, thinking he might wish to have speech with me. Next with but slight accent of a foreign sort, he said to me:

"How now, lad, art thou not afeared of me? When thou perceived me, why didst thou not run with all speed hence, lest the bloody Papist should hew thee in small pieces that he might with more of ease devour thy flesh?"

"In truth, sir," I made reply, "I did not fly since I feared no harm from thee."

Whereat the old man laughed in hearty way. Next clapping me upon the shoulder, went he on thus:

"I see—thou art a brave lad, and I like thee. I did but look at thee in angry way from mere jest, as I do to others of thy age, since so many of them in this land of thine have made scoff at me as an instrument of Satan and of the Pope—who say my hands do drip with blood of Protestants—that I were most busy with my sword upon the Eve of St. Bartholomew. And in truth were I then within the walls of great Paris, albeit I shed no blood, but did truly, and at much risk unto myself, save lives of certain heretics. I might tell thee, lad, tales of war that would cause to thee much of delight."

"May it please thee, sir, I would be most glad to listen unto such," I said. "And though I would not wish to see the shedding of blood, save to necessary ends, yet might I most calmly hear tales of much letting of the same."

"Then, my lad, could I tell thee of red waves which have mine eyes beheld flowing upon trampled fields, and might I teach thee how to let, in most easy way the blood of enemies, for their good and for thine own as well. Could I in truth make of thee a swordsman of some skill. Likewise could I cause thee to add to thy English tongue the Spanish and the French as well." Then he smiled in pleasant way, marking no doubt the delight I surely gave expression of at the much bewildering array of opportunities which he had named. Next went he on: "By our Lady, I might make a man of thee. What may be thy name?" When I had told him this he nodded much. "Now I do recall that I passed thee yesterday with Sir

Philip Wynnington. I have it from my kinsman that thy sire is true Knight and man as well, and that he hath used him ever as just neighbor should. And of a truth do I hold him not one whit the less in my esteem for being heretic. Do I trust, my boy, thou wilt name to thy sire the things I have spoken of." When had I in fervid way gave assurance that I would so do, he made conclusion thus: "Surely the good Knight will permit that I instruct and amuse his heir."

Then did Don José pat me again upon the shoulder and give me smile of much encouragement, after which went he upon his way. Did I not fail that same eve to seek out Sir Philip, and to recite to him all that Sir Harry's guest had said. And showed my father much of interest in that to which he gave ear. When I had told all to him, he said that he would consider of the matter. On the morrow when Master Hayden had come for our lesson, did he with much of curiosity on his face, say to me:

"Have I just seen Sir Philip riding forth in his most trim attire, and with the black hunter groomed more to suit the eye than hath been the wont for some while. Hath thy sire of late years rarely gone upon visits to his neighbors; and yet doth he this day in truth seem minded to show himself unto some friend. Whom might it be, I do wonder. Thou know'st not, Walter, eh?"

"Nay, sir," made I reply, albeit I did in my heart have hope that Sir Philip had gone to seek Don José.

After we were through the lesson, the which my tutor did not at first comprehend, so that I were at much pains to make it clear unto him, he said:

"Do I hear much of a certain cutthroat scoundrel who tarries for the while at Hillgate, and who openly avows

himself a Papist. Doth not Sir Harry think that he works sufficient of evil by clinging himself to the Babylonian faith? Nay, he must needs add to the burden of affront towards his godly neighbors by thus maintaining in their midst a man, or rather would I say a demon, who slew his scores in the horrid Eve of St. Bartholomew. Would I be bound that fellow has tasted child's flesh. And some who were of sufficient rashness to go nigh him do aver that his feet have not the proper shape—that neath his shoes there be hoofs."

"Yet, sir, I think not so," said I in the defence of my new friend. "For yesterday I beheld Don José, and moreover had speech with him. Though are the fashion of his shoes most strange, since were they made in distant lands, yet do these go to excess in the way of length, whereas would they be most short to fit with aught of snugness and of ease a hoof."

"Nay, nay, boy, there art thou at grievous fault, for in the pictures which have I seen of Satan in mortal guise, wore he long shoes, of the very sort thou hast described. And in truth hast thou proven by word of mouth that, though this Don—whate'er might be his name—may not himself be the Evil One, yet hath he a devil's hoof. And thou shouldst take shame to thyself, Walter, for having paused to hold converse with him. Thou shouldst have fled, or since 'tis said the fellow be lame and could not have hoped in reason to overtake thee, thou might have reviled him, albeit keeping wary eye upon him lest he might show a pistol."

"Yet, sir, would Sir Philip not take me to task with much of severity if I should bear me toward an elder and a stranger in such way?"

"I meant not, Walter, that thou shouldst be lacking in the right courtesy which thy sire hath taught thee. Yet sure am I thou couldst have avoided this miscreant."

"Yet, sir, touching the charge that Don José hath aided in the foul murders of St. Bartholomew, he did say that on that same Eve he were in Paris——"

"Ah, and had he the hardihood to make confession that he hath dyed his hands with——"

"Nay, sir," did I in turn make interruption, "he said far from that. Though shed he not one drop of blood, did he at much risk unto himself preserve the lives of some of our own faith."

"There hast thou again, Walter, proven the villainy of this same man of blood. For doth the very fact that he made denial of the hellish part he took in that same bloody revel, assure me of his guilt. My boy, would he never dare in this land of good Protestants to give of his deeds a true account. Of a certainty is he thus convicted by his own mouth."

And now did the door open, and entered Sir Philip, much to the wonder of us both. When had he in pleasant way made salutation to the Parson, my sire said to him:

"Have I the wish, sir, to give thee now holiday from the task of instructing Walter. Though have I no reason to complain that thou hast in any way failed of thy duty, since in truth doth thy pupil seem to have come on right well in way of learning, yet now is there opportunity of his gaining knowledge that may prove of great service unto him. And for the present will this new teaching give occupation to the lad's time." Then as he did note the look of dismay which o'erspread the countenance of Master Hay-

den: "Yet, sir, will I not find need to withdraw from thee the small stipend of thy place as tutor."

"Thou art truly kind, Sir Philip," the Parson said yet wearing still a troubled look. "And would it seem meet for me to ask who it is that shall have the pleasure of instructing in my stead thine heir?"

"It chances," made my sire answer, "that there is now in this neighborhood a Spanish gentleman, who hath been scholar as well as soldier, and who hath desire to instruct Walter in the French and Spanish tongues, and as well in art of fencing."

Filled though I was with much delight at this prospect, yet had I wish to spare the feelings of my old tutor, albeit having little fondness for the man. So I strove to give no expression of the liking for this change which I truly felt. Yet had I little need thus to hide from him my thoughts, since did not the Parson pay least heed unto myself. Was he gazing at my father with look of horror. Next he asked:

"Can it be truth, Sir Philip, that this same instructor is now the guest of Sir Harry Bullard?"

"Is it he—and none other."

"Yet, Sir Philip," did Master Hayden urge in pleading way, "canst thou place a Papist as teacher to thine heir—one that might lead the boy to embrace, perhaps in secret, the ways and abominations of wicked Rome?"

"Rest you easy upon that score, for hath this gentleman, by name and title, Don José de Madura, given unto me full assurance that he will in no way strive to turn his pupil from the faith in the which were he born."

Whereat the Parson shook his head and muttered:

"Have they of Rome but small regard for oaths and promises."

Yet did his countenance soon clear, since had he no doubt perceived that Sir Philip were not to be turned with aught of ease from his set purpose, while as well might the good man have found it a consoling thought that the stipend were to be had without the earning, and that would he now have more time in the which to seek the favor of the great.

IX.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

THE next day came Don José to Merton Hall, and was shown with all due honor to a great chamber, over against the one which for some years had been my own. And when they brought the box which contained such belongings as were yet his, I did note the smallness and its shabby look as well. Said he to myself touching this:

"Thou dost perceive, Walter, that since I have been used to camps and marches, am I little minded to much cumber myself with needless things of luxury."

Did Jane Edmunds, when first she beheld my new tutor, gaze at him with senses well nigh gone from wonder. When next I chanced upon her she exclaimed:

"Most strange to look upon is this Papist man! And yet hath he, I did truly note, a kindly look about the eye; and will we find him no doubt right pleasing in the main. Dost not think, Walter, we might turn him from the errors of Rome?"

I then looked at Jane in searching way, and thus did bring a blush into her face. Next, in meaning tone, I said:

"Have I told to thee, Jane, the romance of good Mistress Sarah Quick."

"Thou hast of a truth made recital of the same to me," she said, while her blushes deepened much. "Yet why dost

thou recall this matter now?" Then came there a quick snapping into Jane's eyes. "Dost think I would have this same white and yellow limper from yond seas for a husband, though might he be a dozen Dons?"

"Nay, good Mistress Edmunds; would I in truth ne'er have hardihood to hint at such a thing. Yet did come the thought to me that if foolish Sarah were now here instead of thee, would she become enamored much of Don José."

Though my soft answer in measure turned away her wrath, yet did she look at me in way of suspicion, as if she were much in doubt touching the truth of my extenuation in the matter. But I did note that she bore herself with strange reserve toward my tutor, who in truth seemed little minded to show her gallantry. Mayhap by this warning hint I saved Jane from some such fate as that of her who had kept Merton Hall before her. That same even did Don José treat Sir Philip and myself to the first recital of his adventures. Then sat he in the library holding his small glass of red wine, oft emptied to end that his throat might be kept clear for speech, and likewise filled again that it might be in all readiness for like pressing need. And would he at times shift this from one hand to the other, no doubt to rest them in turn from weariness of many flourishes and gestures, by aid of which did he give, now accent, and now illustration to his words. Sat my sire opposite to Don José, and in his large chair. Wore he grave face, save when aught were said in jesting extravagance, or were some amusing incident related. Then would Sir Philip relax his features with a quiet smile. When it did chance the point were clear unto me, would I laugh with somewhat of heartiness, albeit keeping watchful eye upon my sire, lest he should be minded by sharp glance to

give unto me, as had been his wont, reproof for an excess of mirth. Yet when the story were serious of vein, telling of the letting of blood or of some hazardous escape, would I harken in wonder, though striving much meanwhile to keep my eyes within their bounds, and my mouth from flying open in unseemly way. While was he telling of the Eve of St. Bartholomew, Don José spoke thus:

"Was it, by our Lady, a most fearful night. In the afternoon of the three and twentieth day of August, while I did take the air chanced I upon the Count—yet with thy leave, Sir Philip, will I name no names—is it sufficient to say that this noble stood high in the party of the true faith, albeit thus calling the Catholic belief for the satisfaction of mine own conscience, and not with aught of intent to cast reflection upon the religion of the honored Knight of Merton." Here did my sire make his acknowledgment by slight bow. "When he named to myself the things which were planned to come to pass at the midnight hour a feeling of horror stole upon me; for though I have little minded the sight of much blood upon the field of battle, yet for resort to massacre had I ever but small fondness. Still deeming it unwise to speak my true thoughts touching the matter, I did feign zeal in this same, and thus deceived the Count, with whom had I more than once before fought against the misguided and wicked heretics; yet craving your pardon, Sir Philip, as meaning to cast naught of reflection upon the doctrines which dost thou in all honesty of purpose follow." Once more my sire with slight bow made acknowledgment to Don José. "Of a truth did I lead the Count to believe that I would see to the taking off of a certain family of—the proscribed faith which dwelt next door to where I lodged, while waiting to offer my

service unto the—Catholic party in the renewed wars of the religions which I foresaw, and which did of a truth come about. Yet when there was darkness did I steal in secret way unto this family, marked as 'twas for swift destruction, and gave to them warning of their danger. Yet whither could they flee? Six of them were there, and five servants. Did we weigh well the conditions and the chances, and fixed at last upon a plan of mine own devising, for would their mute terror have surely led them, but for my counsel, to give way unto despair. Was there in this house a loft, to which the entrance lay through a trap-door in the ceiling of a certain chamber. By means of a ladder they all mounted into the loft, taking with them water and provisions. Then did they close the trap-door. This was I able to conceal by the curtains of a bed, which I moved until it were right beneath the same trap-door. Next went I through some of the apartments, choosing such at random, and scattering things right and left, thereby giving to the house a look of much confusion, such as would surely mark a place that had been left in much of haste by fleeing holders of the same. Then in secret manner did I depart, taking care to leave the outer door ajar, yet to a width of not more than a single finger's breadth. Next I returned to my lodgings, and fastening upon me a cross of the fashion that was to mark the members of the destroying bands, I sat and awaited the hour of midnight. Once or twice I glanced out from my window upon the dim streets that to me seemed to wear a strange, deep gloom. And was there likewise something passing strange about the silence which then did hang over the great city. Swift flew the time, and sooner than had I looked for such, came there upon my ears the distant sound

of bells. Then sprang I to my window and listened. Came there far-off shouts and sound of guns. Of a truth 'twere now the bloody day of St. Bartholomew. I ran forth upon the street, and were the sounds now louder and nearer. And was there more than one glow, fast gaining in its brightness, upon the sky. With the nearing shouts and noise of musketry could be heard words of terror and woman's screams. Lights burned in many windows and faces looked out, albeit did such seem to wear most strange aspect. And was I of uneasy mind when looked I upon the dark walls and windows of the house wherein were hid they whom I had strove to succor. And now heard I rapid footsteps, and when I glanced in the direction from whence these came, I beheld a man, half dressed, who had come from round a nigh corner and was running at full speed toward where I stood. As he came nigh, did he half pause as if fearing me. Yet when he saw that I had turned aside, as if not minded to check him in his flight, he rushed swiftly past; and then did I note, even in the dimness, the hunted look upon his face. Scarce was he a dozen yards beyond me when round the self same corner he had passed came a pursuing throng, two of whom bore dripping torches. As came they up to me I showed to them that I had, in pretence at least, taken up the blood-red cross. Yet one of them cried out to me in panting tone:

"'Why didst thou let the fleeing heretic pass thee?'

"Not paying heed to this demand, I called out in tone of authority:

"'Halt there!'

"Thereat came they to standstill, and in hard-breathing way looked at me as if disposed to listen to my words. Five were they in number. All wore swords, or else long

daggers, while were there two that as well bore axes. And did the one who had called out to me carry on his shoulder a musket.

"'I have need of your aid,' went I on. 'Yonder half-naked wretch is of no value to us, since will he of a surety fall into the hands of others of the true belief. Yet hath such an one,' naming my patron, the Count, 'committed to me the pleasing task of making end of the family,' here I spoke the name of those that had trusted in me to preserve them, 'who live in this same dark dwelling. Do I demand the aid of each of thee in this matter!'

"Whereat the five gave expression of joy at the prospect of a speedy butchery; and the two with axes ran forward with intent to burst in the door of the house which had I pointed out to them. But when they found the portals free to them, by means of the door being left somewhat ajar by myself, gave they expression of wonder at this thing. Came I into the house with pretended look of apprehension, and cried out:

"'''Sdeath, can the heretics have flown from the toils I did spread for them at such pains?'

"When, hurrying about the place I led them to the chambers which had been by my own hands thrown into confusion, came there to the minds of the five belief that their prey had fled. Loud were their curses, and in the utterance of such did I join in the words, yet not in spirit. When he who bore the musket said to his comrades that to lament were surely of most small avail, and gave to them reminder that there was yet awaiting much work for zealous hands, I declared that further tasks of useful kind had been set me for that same night. As with the others

passed I from the house did I say to one of the twain who bore axes:

"'Sblood, would I be avenged of this place! If thou wilt but for the space of a moment give me loan of that heavy weight of sharp steel thou bearest, will I have down this same door, which in truth should have been barred gainst us rather than left ajar.'

"'Nay, friend,' made he reply, 'the right of smiting down this door, as well as the pleasure thereof do belong unto my comrade and myself.'

"Whereat did he and his fellow make sharp attack with their axes upon the oaken barrier, which yielded to the blows and tottering inward crashed upon the floor. Then the five upon the one hand, and myself upon the other, exchanged the wish that our search might have for reward the blood of many victims. They passed quickly up the street, while I faced opposite to them. Yet did I not go this way far ere I paused, and kept within an easy distance of the house whose dwellers had I thus far preserved. Twice I perceived small bands bent on blood going nigh the place, yet each time did they upon beholding the fallen door imagine that murder had already been done within. Yet should it have chanced that my trick failed to give impression as I desired, and the fellows should have entered in the house, would I have run in among them and spread report that had these heretics made good their escape from the place, though had they all been caught elsewhere and destroyed. Did the clamor, now distant and now near, not for a moment cease as slowly wore away the night.

"The glow from the fires had dimmed much when the dawn first showed itself high in the East. Then went I to

my lodgings for rest, though had I in truth no thoughts of sleep. Stretched I my limbs upon the couch, though holding them in readiness for use if my ears should catch more than wonted noises from out the street. Might it have been nigh unto the hour of eight when I arose, and tasted some little food for sake of strength. Then went I forth once more. Though silent were it near at hand, yet was there noise of many distant shouts upon the air. Passed I through the doorway, which my wits had opened now some hours gone by, and mounting to the chamber from whence the trap gave entrance to the loft, I spoke softly to the hiding ones, bidding them to be of good cheer, for did I count them as saved, though in truth might they be forced to lie thus under cover for some few days. Came there in reply low words of thanks and the assurance that, though they had undergone the torments of ceaseless alarms throughout the fearful night, were they yet all alive and well, and would pay close heed unto whate'er of counsel I might give them, since they reposed in me full confidence and trust. When had I reached again the portals, I beheld two skulking fellows who wore not the badge of the slayers. I doubted not their purpose was to rob in this house, as they mayhap had done at others which bore signs of having been burst in for the taking off of Rome's rebels; and did I call out to them:

"'How now, my fellows! Why come ye so late to gather up the fragments of the feast. Already have full five of your kind entered this place and helped to strip it of the few things of worth it had once possessed. Will the time in truth be wasted here, unless ye are minded and prepared to tear up and carry hence the boards of floors and casements.'

"'Nay, good master,' did one of them make reply with a laugh. 'God be praised we are not driven to such labors as thou dost name. If not here, is there elsewhere value to be had for the picking up.'

"Whereat the twain made off, and were soon out of view. Did I loiter within sight of the place for some hours, and yet saw I no one approach the same with seeming intent of making entrance thereto. Then deeming it safe to so do, I wandered from the neighborhood in aimless way and for no set purpose. Were in truth the sights of that day most trying unto me, old soldier though I might be. Did I chance upon the dead of all ages and of both sexes, while were some hewn and torn in horrid way. And once when I were passing by a group of dead, which seemed to be all of one family, I beheld approaching this three ladies, richly clad, and attended by as many gentlemen of haughty mien, who wore the red cross. And did they pause and gaze with look of interest upon the victims of the King's decree, just as they would upon so many beasts or rare birds which had the hunters brought from out the forest. Then he who seemed the youngest of these gentlemen uttered something, which I failed to catch, but which was no doubt a jest, for burst they each into a laugh. Next spoke she of these ladies who was tallest, and to me looked the fairest. And likewise did she seem, albeit in a voice most musical, to utter some sort of jest. And had this surely much more of wit than was there in her companion's, since now the laughter came in loud peals. Then passed they on, in search no doubt of other sights which should please them as had this. And were these very gentlemen in courtly fashion showing much respect unto the ladies, while the fair ones tossed each her head in wilful way, as are her kind

oft wont to do when comes to them the homage of the stronger sex. More than once I beheld some luckless one with terror in his face as ran he panting down the way, while close behind him there pursued a band who no doubt did deem this thing as a new form of that rare sport, the chase. And were there some groups of lookers-on of rabble sort, who would now yell, and now laugh in gleeful way, when they beheld such hunted ones either run to earth and finished by sharp steel, or else brought down by skilful aim of bullet, or of hard missile.

"Yet of all the scenes of that day, the one which did the most impress itself upon my mind I beheld when chanced my steps to bring me by the Palace of the Louvre, where dwelt Charles the Ninth and the relentless Queen-mother. Then heard I quick steps and glancing round I saw another of those hunted creatures, who driven from his cover vainly hoped that in his flight at mere haphazard there might chance to open to him some asylum. Came there into my mind the thought that 'twould be well for this one if there should speed a swift bullet now to quickly end his time of torture. And just then my eye fell upon a figure at an opened window of the palace. 'Twas a man who grasped a musket, the which did he now aim at the fleeing one in what to me seemed most careless fashion. Then with a strange laugh, that had much of wildness in it, he fired. Did the bullet go far wide of mark, and the runner kept on. But shall I never, to my last day, forget the look upon the face of him who had fired that same ill-aimed bullet. Did it in truth seem as if he beheld horrors from the which he strove to keep his thoughts by restless action. Much shook his nerveless hand as yet this clung to the smoking musket; and I did note the unhealthy look

he had, and the great disorder of his hair and beard. Before had he disappeared I perceived this unhappy one to be none other than he who wore the crown of France. Though were he in truth called King Charles the Ninth, were he but wax in the hands of his cruel and ambitious mother; and 'twas she who in his stead did rule. And though it were his hand which signed the mad decree that had washed the streets of Paris with blood, yet had he been forced to do this by her stronger will; for were in truth such fearful deeds far from his thoughts. And whene'er I think of those who have had misery brought on them through this same time of St. Bartholomew, am I minded that the one who the most deserved my pity was the Ninth Charles of France. And in truth am I of firm belief that the foul massacre were brought about by ambitious minds for both revenge and party ends. Did I but think there were aught in Rome's teaching that would give warrant to the acts of that most bloody time, then would I in scorn renounce mine ancient faith."

X.

ONE SMALL MAID.

When Sir Philip asked of him whether the family whom he had succored made final escape with their lives, replied Don José in these words:

"Were they forced to remain in hiding for full seven days, while saw I to it that they had sufficient food. And would I each even steal up to the chamber beneath their loft, and give to them account of how the rage gainst their people were fast expending its wild fury. At last I brought them through the gates of Paris by means of a written pass which I had favor to procure."

When he had said these last words he sank back into his chair and uttered a most deep and dismal sigh. Then did he of a sudden seem to perceive that there were naught to provoke such expression in the recital of the escape of half a score of people from grave perils, and with a laugh he went on:

"By our Lady, 'twas a strange matter for me thus to sigh over, but in truth was I not so doing by reason of their lives having thus been spared. Yet what did occur thereafter doth leave recollections, the which do still renew a soreness in my breast, albeit would I not wish to make hint that for my labors and perils in their behalf I was not shown right measure of gratitude. For have I on that account small ground for just complaint."

Now did Sir Philip seek to turn Don José's thought from that which might bring him pain, by asking if he had wished to join the Armada. With a laugh made he this reply:

"Nay, Sir Philip, 'twould have availed me naught to have wished, since was I then, and sorely gainst my will, in the service of one Muley Bey, a considerable man in the land of Algiers."

Then the old soldier related to us how having taken ship from Cadiz, with view of offering to the Venetian Council a certain project by the which might both they and he hope to profit, the ship was fallen in with by a large and swift pirate of Algiers. Did he and his companions offer but small resistance, seeing that they might not hope to make escape against such odds as now opposed them. Was poor Don José sold at a price, which he deemed as low to point of mockery. And was there now upon his face an injured look as he made mention of this. Yet was it a matter of good fortune that he fell into the hands of Muley Bey, who caused him to instruct his sons, and as well certain of his retainers. Also did he on his part pick up the language of his pupils. Then told he of the odd ways and customs of the people amid whom he dwelt in captivity. And did he cause old Muley Bey to appear in most comic light, by telling of his frequent lamentations o'er the too great fondness of the ladies of his harem for warring amongst themselves.

He said touching this matter that would they pull out much of hair; and likewise was there many scratchings of face with design to mar beauty. And since was Muley of a tender heart did he not order that punishment should be meted out unto the offending women. Made Don José

his escape after captivity of some eight months; and in getting off was he forced to kill one and sorely wound another of his pupils, which grieved him much. Yet was there somewhat of consolation in the thought that the twain had heeded not with strictness the precepts touching the handling of the sword which had he imparted to them, else would they not have come to grief.

On the morrow gave the old soldier-scholar his first lessons to me in the Spanish and the French tongue as well. And later in the day did he bring out foils; and then with look of much amusement in his face would he with slight, easy motions of the wrist ward off the thrusts which would I make with far more of eagerness than of skill. Then he began to show me the proper way to hold my weapon, and the many moves of both attack and defence. And would he make explanation in most clear terms of the wherefore of each motion. When drew to end this lesson, came there in unto us Sir Philip, who was minded to knock some of the rust from off his fencing arm. Then did our professor of this same art show his great skill, frequently and with ease disarming his opponent, till at length my father retired from the contest, and in strong words gave praise unto my tutor's work. Next did Don José tell us of fencing deeds which had he performed upon fields of battle, and as well relation made he of some amusing things said and done in times of war.

And passed on thus the months with profit and as well of pleasure to myself. Did I learn with much of quickness to put my thoughts into either French or Spanish words, while would my tutor affirm that the accent with which I spoke the same bid fair to possess some purity in time. And likewise I began to show somewhat of skill in the

handling of my foil. So also did Sir Philip improve much his fencing. And meanwhile the old man's store of tales and incidents, and descriptions of amusing ways of most odd people, gave no sign of having neared its end.

Came Parson Hayden at times to Merton Hall, and then would he ask me with much show of interest how I were coming on with my new studies; and when I would spout to him in the foreign tongues would an expression of disdain creep about his lips, though he no doubt did strive much to conceal the hatred and contempt he surely had for French and Spanish words. And when met my old tutor and my new, would the Parson be quite lavish of pleasant words. Yet did I note that there was in his eyes a look that told of keen dislike whene'er he would look upon the averted face of Don José, though were he all smiles again when came together the glances of the twain. Yet did the old soldier bear himself unto Master Hayden with much of courtesy and of respect, paying due heed to his remarks. Had I belief he entertained no liking for the Parson, though he in private uttered no thing to detriment of the man. Yet did he deem no doubt that since he had in measure superseded the other, 'twere well and kindly to pay him the amends of much seeming consideration.

Did I still lack some months of reaching the age of sixteen years, when came to me the first chance of putting to real use my new-found knowledge of foreign language. One Saturday, having half holiday, went I upon a ramble, in the which I chanced to pass not far from Clayton Hall, and then had I consciousness of thirst. Was I minded of the old spring at which I drank the day in which I did with great obedience much kiss the unhappy Lady Merryweather; and going thither now I partook of the sparkling

water. Was I about to turn away when I heard from the avenue of trees a child's loud screams. Running in the direction from whence came the sounds I soon beheld a little maid of some five years, as I found thereafter, gazing with childish terror at her nurse, a stout young woman, who lay upon the ground, writhing in a fit.

"Be comforted, little one," did I say in soothing tone, "there is naught of danger to her life in this. Soon will she be herself again, albeit with much of sleepiness."

Looked now the small maid at me with much of vexation in her pretty eyes, and then she said to herself, and in the French tongue:

"What doth he say?"

Then spoke I in the French the same words which I had vainly uttered to her in my own language. Did she now gaze at me, first in wonder, and then with a look of delight on her small face; and next cried she out:

"Thou art good to speak words I know." Then was her bright look somewhat marred by small shade of annoyance. "Yet doth poor Honore feel much pain. Oh, my poor nurse!"

"Nay," did I explain, "for have I been told that they who suffer from this thing are conscious of no pain. One of the servants at my home would be took thus often, yet did she never seem thereafter the worse for her fits."

Was the pretty child gazing at me meanwhile as if she had not full understanding of my words. Then I said that I would go to the spring and bring the large cup that lay there, filled with cool water for the yet writhing woman. At this the little one made some outcry, and in most winning way did supplicate me to leave her not there, but rather to bear her with me to the spring. Gave

I assent to this by taking her within my arms and lifting her till her head rested upon my shoulder; and did her soft curls brush in pleasant way gainst my cheek as moved I toward the spring. Then when asked I of her what might be her name, she pursed up her small red rosebud of a mouth, as if she were telling that which had been taught to her at much pains, and said, nodding her head at each word:

"Constance Leigh."

Then did the dear child chatter in pleasant fashion of how she loved to dwell at Clayton, where her Aunt Kate was most kind to her, and gave her jams and other goodies, and had likewise made present to her of a fine family of dolls, to say naught of a most cunning kitten whom she loved dearly. When was the water brought unto the ailing Honore, did I find the woman beginning to come from out the grasp of this her sudden malady. And when had I bathed her face with the cool water, and did move with intent to return the cup to its proper place beside the spring, Constance must needs again mount to my shoulder, where in truth was I once more right glad to place her head; and went she on in same way of chatter about her own affairs, which though small to others were of large import to her. When came we again to Honore was she recovered, albeit she now showed signs of much drowsiness. By my aid was she enabled to gain her feet, and then taking her arm with my left hand that I might steady her, had I yet to spare my right hand which was not idle, since was it seized within the soft clasp of the tiny fingers of my new found friend, Constance. And thus did we pass up the avenue of trees until we had come to Clayton Hall. Then I gave over the sleepy nurse to

one of the servants who had perceived us coming and had rushed out, most intent on being told the why and wherefore of this thing. Yet stood I hand in hand with pretty Mistress Leigh until came out to us the Lady Clayton, who spoke in most kindly fashion, albeit were she much affected in her manner.

"Well done, my good young Master of Merton," did she say, "art thou in truth a credit to thy knightly sire, for hast thou just rescued two distressed damsels. One hast thou already parted with, and the which was done seemingly with much of readiness upon thy part; yet to the younger and the fairer of the twain dost thou still cling."

"That do I, madam," I made reply, with a sense of much redness upon my cheeks, "for is she in truth a most dear child."

"Is she not so, Master Walter. See how she doth look up at us in wondering way, knowing not what we speak, for as yet kens she naught save of the French tongue, which I do myself speak most indifferently, yet which I am told thou can'st rattle off with much of readiness. But of Constance—is she the daughter of my cousin, Sir Francis Leigh, who was kinsman upon my father's side, and not upon my mother's, as was my dear Aunt, the Lady Merryweather. Well, did Sir Francis die while the little one were no more than two years old—let me think—were the time three years gone by. Was his wife a Frenchwoman, albeit a Protestant, or as they do call it a Huguenot; and hath she dwelt since with her brother, the Count de Brecy, at his chateau in Picardy. Had there been much distemper among the young about them, and did the Lady Leigh, herself then nigh bed-ridden, send to us small Constance by one kind kinsman who was jour-

neying to London. Right glad was I to see her, though sent they the child with this nurse, whom it seems hath the way of falling into fits. But thou shalt come some day soon and be entertained of fair Mistress Leigh, wilt thou not?"

"By thy leave, madam, that will I most gladly do," made I reply in eager way.

"And now at parting, Walter, shalt thou kiss the little lady."

Whereat I sank down upon my knees, and folding Constance in my arms, gave I her a kiss, which did she return in all readiness. At this my Lady Clayton clapped her hands, and with merry laugh, she said:

"'Twas well done, Walter, and it doth bespeak the truth that at the proper age thou wilt bear thyself unto our sex in right gallant way, as it shall become thee to do. And yet, alack, when my dear aunt, the Lady Merryweather, did offer thee her most ripe lips you made display of not that same willingness and fervor which hath my small kinswoman just now aroused in thee."

When after rising to my feet and taking leave of my Lady in way of much respect, I had started down the avenue of trees, I glanced over my shoulder. Then saw I the little maid gazing after me, though did her aunt who had already started for her door, seem to be bidding her to follow. Waved I my hand to Constance, and extended she her two arms toward me. Went I back to Merton Hall filled to the full with gentle thoughts of this little maid, upon whom had it been my happiness to chance. In the evening of that same day, when I had come into the library of Sir Philip, at his direction, that I might listen with him to further recital of incidents in the life of far-

wandering and much-perceiving Don José, could I not even then keep thoughts away from what had that afternoon befallen me. And in truth did now appear such expression in my countenance as to call upon me the attention of my sire, who then put questions to me touching what had that day occurred. As made I to him truthful account of my chance visit to Clayton, gave he ear with much of interest in his look, into which there did more than once creep a smile. And when came my recital to an end, he said:

"Art thou to be forever the sport of the other sex, Walter? Thou didst walk with open eyes into the snares which fair young Mistress de Wycherly spread for thee. And now when thy wounds of heart be well healed dost thou offer this same unto one small woman of five years, that she may do by it as she will."

"Truth to tell, sir," I made bold now to declare, "am I most surely of the firm belief that Constance Leigh will never in her whole life cause wounds unto my feelings."

"Nay, Walter," did he say with shake of head, "thou canst not tell surely at first meeting with persons how thou shalt afterwards be treated of them. Hast forgotten how at first Maud did bear herself toward thee?" Then turning to Don José went he on: "When yields he to the magic of her glance, what perfect faith the lover doth repose in his bright mistress, though too many times is there naught to give warrant for the same."

Then did Sir Philip seem to note that there was a look of pain upon the face of the old follower of Fortune. And would he no doubt have strove to turn the subject from the one of love, had not Don José said:

"Dost thou indeed speak truth, Sir Philip." Then sigh-

ing deeply went he on thus: "Have I of a verity felt this night an old wound reopen in my breast. And came this thing to pass from certain words spoken by good Master Walter. Did he mention the name of de Brecy, which I myself was at pains to speak not at the time I told thee of the Eve of St. Bartholomew. 'Twere in truth the father of the present Count, and himself with all the family as well, whom I did warn and then guard as hid they in their loft through the period of great peril to them all. When saw I them thereafter at their home in Picardy, was my heart sore smitten by the elder daughter of their house. Yet might she not become my own. This saw I all too plainly. I overheard by merest chance the lady as she made hint of this same, and as well found much fault with my poor looks. Of these did she to my great pain make light, saying things the which would she have never uttered had she but dreamed of their coming unto my ears. 'Twas the youngest of the sisters who in time became the bride of Sir Francis Leigh, and then his widow."

Have I no doubt my sire was casting about for soothing words to offer unto Don José, when it came into my mind that but for this soldier might Constance Leigh have never been. And then without a moment's pause to weigh how might my conduct seem unto my elders, I sprang up and seizing both hands of him whom had I in most sudden way come to look upon in light of benefactor, I exclaimed:

"How may I give full thanks to thee, my much respected friend, for that thou, in saving from the hands of the destroyers her who became the Lady Leigh, didst at same time save to me sweet Constance!"

Whereat did Sir Philip and Don José as well gaze at me in much wonder for a moment, and then exchanging glances they both smiled; while I myself, now perceiving that 'twould have been well had I thought this same thing without naming it unto my elders, made manifest the great confusion which I truly felt. My sire, still with smile upon his face, shook his head, and said in pleasant tone:

"Do I commend thee, Walter, for thy frankness, albeit 'twere right for thee to learn to curb that same tongue of thine, lest by giving expression to thy thoughts in much too hasty way, it might lead thee into needless troubles, and hold thee up to the derision of they who might fail to weigh thine honesty of purpose."

Yet did the oddness of this my youthful outburst seem to slowly grow upon my tutor, till at last he sank backward in his chair and laughed softly to himself. When had this inclination passed from him, he wiped his eyes, and first looking at me in most kindly way, he turned to my sire and said:

"Though hath our Walter touched by mere chance my old and unhealed wound, yet hath he charmed away the pain by arousing within me somewhat of mirth." Then turning once more toward his pupil: "Yet would I not, my Walter for the world strive to cast ridicule upon thee for that thou hast had the manliness to thus give expression to thy admiration for a small maid, who no doubt doth well deserve the same."

Within a week did I answer summons of the Lady Clayton to go and be entertained of her youthful guest. Yet gave not this time Jane Edmunds much care unto my apparel, not being minded to great furbishing and making

over, since to her present eyes were a brushing and one slight pressing with hot iron sufficient for the purpose. Nor did she look with much of favor upon my visit to Clayton Hall, and touching the matter she spoke thus:

"Say others beside thee, Walter, that the little one from France is fair indeed and of pleasant ways for her small age, yet have I in truth more than once known the beauty of such a child to turn to ugliness ere had she grown to womanhood. Likewise have I known tempers to sour, mayhap from their own excess of sweetness, twixt childhood and full growth. And was this poor child's father well nigh penniless when was he cut off by fever in a way most sudden."

This time did I not ride forth from Merton on the back of old Dick, since had Sir Philip kindly loaned to me his black hunter. And when came I to Clayton, was there none to laugh at either the appearance of my mount or at myself. Yet was there in waiting pretty Constance, who clapped her small hands with joy at sight of me. Gave she to me in truth warm welcome, and did she show to me her dolls, and living pets. Then took me by the hand this sweet young maid, and led me to the places and the nooks which had the most her favor. And chatted she meanwhile in voice most soft and musical, while I finding these same sounds much to my liking, was pleased to listen to them, and little heeded the many words she uttered. When came her nurse Honore to summon us into the presence of kind Lady Clayton, she said to me that was there prepared already a feast at which we two alone might sit. And after my Lady had received me, and in arch way had rallied me touching my great regard for the little Constance, she caused to be brought in to us

a low table covered with good things. At this sat my small hostess and myself, and while she enjoyed the goodies such as were to her young taste, I strove to keep her company in this way, albeit with somewhat of effort, since were I too happy then to find aught of pleasure in the act of eating. Meanwhile my larger hostess did gossip much. Went I away from Clayton this time with yet dearer thoughts of my fair little friend, than when did I first beheld her. And within a fortnight came I again upon a happy visit to Clayton.

Some little time thereafter, was the enchanting child brought to Merton in the care of stout Honore. And no sooner had this nurse given her precious charge into my hands, than went she off into a fit. I left the poor woman in the care of Jane Edmunds, who made profession of much horror at sight of the writhing form, yet knowing the passing nature of the malady was no doubt most anxious to bring about a quick return to consciousness, in hope there yet might be some time for gossip twixt them. Was Constance now alarmed much less for her poor nurse than had she been when was the woman stricken upon the avenue of Clayton. Did I lead the little one unto Sir Philip in his library, and was he taken much by her childish beauty and grace, and as well by her manner and her words, spoken as were these in her soft, sweet voice. Strove my sire to amuse her with his talk, of which had I the pleasure to be interpreter. While was he thus engaged came there in to us Don José, who started at sight of young Mistress Leigh, and did tremble much, since was he minded of a likeness which there was, at least in his own mind between Constance and her loved aunt. Yet so pleased was he in truth by the charm of our bright

guest, that he soon seemed to be again at ease. And did he beg of her the boon of one small kiss, the which she granted, albeit showing not much of fervor. Then moved she to myself and taking my hand leaned against me, looking shyly around.

Once more went I to Clayton Hall, and was received by my kind Constance as before. Yet when, one week thereafter did I go thither yet again, met I with disappointment sore. As rode I up before the porch and leaped from off my sire's hunter, came there no Constance forth to greet me. The groom that took the horse wore on his face a smile of some amusement, while did the servant who gave me entrance at the door look at me in half-pitying way, as he said that Lady Clayton would have speech with me concerning the departure of her small guest on the day gone by. With sense of gloom I sat me down; and did I not heed the truth that I were kept waiting nigh to a full hour ere Clayton's mistress came to me.

"Thou poor Walter," did she exclaim, assuming look of much pity, albeit sure I am she felt not this. "Came yesterday that same kinsman of our little one who brought her hither, to fetch her unto her mother at the chateau of the Count de Brecy in Picardy. Had my Lady Leigh sent to this gentleman a message saying were the sickness round about them abated much, and that she were greatly minded to have her daughter with her again. Did Constance plead with all her little might, and with many tears as well, that it should be permitted her to take farewell of thee ere she went. Yet to her prayers this kinsman gave no ear, since was he in most eager haste to get back to his own land upon some pressing matter. Alack, dear Walter, am I indeed most sorrowful for thee. Wilt thou

not soothe thyself and beguile the time with some of our books."

"May it please thee, madam," made I reply, "care I now in truth for no such things, though were these the finest in the world."

And sad at heart was I for many days, though did Don José strive to drive away from me unhappy thoughts by pointing out that there was yet much of bright hope for me. As in my hours of freedom roamed I o'er the hills, were my thoughts on Constance bent, and would I murmur of her to the things of nature. Saw I her face among the trees abroad, and upon the walls at home. And in the night would I oft gaze out upon the shining stars that did look as well upon the roof which sheltered her, though she lay far-off among the hills of Picardy.

XI.

THE GOOD KNIGHT.

Had I noted that, whene'er it chanced through illness or some other weighty cause my sire went not upon a Sunday morn to worship God at Merton Church, but sent his son and heir in his stead, Parson Hayden in his discourse poured out the vials of his wrath upon all they who yet adhered unto Rome's errors. And would be likewise say that there were knaves of that faith who went about, seeking the young and heedless with intent of leading in the end such poor lambs unto the shambles of Satan. Yet when went Sir Philip in person to public worship, would the discourse contain naught touching this same matter. Did I deem it not wrong to impart unto Don José what had been in dim way directed at himself by Master Hayden. Whereat my tutor laughed softly and said:

"Let this good man rest easy concerning thee, my Walter; for since thou hast been committed to me on condition that I tamper not with thy faith, shall I not strive to save thy soul so long as would thy sire have it damned in proper way."

Did Don José never enter in at Merton Church, though would he not have deemed such act of his as deadly sin. Rather was it that he knew full well there were some most bitter gainst his faith, who would view his coming

in their midst in light of bold and wrong intrusion. So would he go upon a Sunday morn over to Hillgate; and was it rumored wide that he would there in company with his kinswoman and her Papist husband, Sir Harry Bullard, bow down before their idols and hatch evil plots against the True Religion. Yet did I by his skilled aid and guidance much improve in use and knowledge of the French and Spanish tongues, and in the fencing art as well, until the early winter following the celebration of my seventeenth birthday. Then Sir Philip made remark that it were high time I gave again some hours of each day unto the ancient tongues, and to the other studies, the which had the Parson and I been wont in truth to puzzle over. Yet came not this thing to pass, though were Master Hayden already looking forward to his regaining in some part his sway o'er Merton's heir. For fell there then upon me in large measure, and upon the whole country roundabout in smaller way, a right grievous blow.

One night came there a sharp, black frost upon the land; and next day o'er the pools was there a coat of ice, on which might one in some places safely walk. So did I contrive to gain an hour's respite from my lessons; and was each minute of the same spent in swift slides upon the dark, smooth surface of our horse-pond. And an hour past the noon went forth Sir Philip on his black hunter, no doubt that he and the horse as well might profit from a ride of more than wonted briskness through the frosty air. Chanced he to take the road that led by the brook at the point where it widened out into a pool of some depth. Above and below this ran the chill waters swiftly and free from ice; yet on the pool was there a sheet of much seeming thickness. And hard by dwelt in her small cottage old

Gammer Day and her tall and red-haired daughter, who did at odd times labor in the field that she might gain the bread for both. That day Gammer called to mind that beyond the brook was there much broken and well-seasoned wood beneath a large old tree, now well nigh dead. And, that she might save herself full many steps which would it have cost her to go round by way of an old and tottering bridge a long way down stream, made she bold to cross the ice. Soon did she reach the farther bank in safety, and gathered for herself much wood, the which she bound up in one large bundle. This she bore upon her shoulders. Yet when she came to cross the ice in her return strayed she from off the path which before had she took; and she chanced when near the middle of the pool to come upon a spot of some weakness, mayhap by reason of the current's swiftness at that point. What-e'er the true cause of this might be, did the ice break beneath her feet, plunging her into the water, where had she power to do little more than cry for help in tones that bespoke her great terror. Just then, as chance would have it, came along Sir Philip, who perceiving her sad plight, leaped from his horse and ran to her aid. Was she by this time clinging to the edge of the ragged ice, where had this same given way; yet did the current threaten much to force her to yield up her grasp and to sweep her far in under the white sheet. When my sire came up to her, he grasped her hand and would have plucked her from out her place of danger on the instant, but that the ice upon which he stood likewise gave way. And was he himself thrown into the much chilled waters, which he found in truth to be beyond his depth. Yet when the ice gave way beneath him fell there also

into the water Gammer's bundle of wood that she had thrown forward from her when sank her footing out of sight. And now Sir Philip made quick use of this same bundle, for upon it he rolled the half-drowned woman, and then swimming contrived he to push the wood against the ice where was its broken edge the strongest. Urging on Gammer he caused her to crawl out upon the sound ice; and then he in turn, climbing upon the bundle of wood, followed her from out the water.

Was she now well nigh perished from what had she already undergone. Then did my sire lift her in his arms and bear her to her cottage, where he laid her beside her hearth, on which burned there but small fire. Was he giving unto this same, large increase, by piling upon the flame such wood as he could find about the place, when came there in the tall daughter, who straightway relieved him of his charge. Then flew Sir Philip to his hunter, which bore him swiftly to the Hall. Meanwhile did my sire move much his limbs for sake of warmth, albeit were his garments frozen stiff. When had he shifted these for others that were dry and thick, he strove to warm himself within by drinking spirits and water that smoked from heat. Swallowed he, though with somewhat of wryness in his face, a mixture that was brought to him by Jane Edmunds, who vowed that this same thing, which was in truth of her own contrivance and compounding, had saved lives. When it were even did he sit close before the blaze in his library with his son nigh him, and listened with much show of interest unto Don José, who told us of a town's siege where had he daily mounted to the walls for three long months, and fought gainst a most stubborn foe. Do I now vainly strive to recall the name of

that town. Mayhap the reason of my forgetfulness of this thing is that the soldier spoke to us then little of feats of arms, since the burden of his recital was upon the odd and comic side of life within the beleaguered town. And did he cause my sire to smile, and myself to laugh as loudly as I deemed it meet to do, as told he of queer ways and words of certain of the citizens, whom it was then his pleasure and duty to defend. In truth were the most amusing of this old man's tales those in which he brought out certain points of human nature. When had my tutor come to end of this recital did Sir Philip close hug himself with his own arms and say:

"Did thy amusing words keep me in truth, Don José, from the thought of my great coldness. Doth it seem as though I might never send through my frame glow of real warmth."

As I withdrew myself from these my elders heard I this old follower of Fortune urging upon my sire to take more of well-heated water and spirits, which in truth did he not seem minded to do. On the morrow my father arose with but slight cough, yet was his face most wan and pinched of aspect. Came he into our lesson-room while were my tutor and myself at it with the foils. When Don José asked of him if he had yet shaken off his coldness, declared he that not only in his breast, but as well in every corner of his frame, was there a feeling of much soreness. Whereat the old man's face wore anxious look. And when soon Sir Philip did remark of coldness in the room, and left us, Don José paced the floor for some moments, shaking much his head meanwhile. Then in sudden manner turning unto me, he laid hand upon my shoulder, and said:

"Thy sire hath truly need of physician, or of some one far more skilled in medicines than I, or for the matter poor Jane Edmunds. And 'tis now full twelve miles from hence to the nearest one of repute who doth practice healing arts. Is his name Rundle, and dwells he hard by the Church of Hillsbury. Will I go seek him upon Sir Philip's swift horse."

Whereat leaving me in state of much worriment touching my sire's condition, limped he quickly from the room. And seemed it to me scarce a moment thereafter when I beheld our friend riding down the avenue at quick canter upon the black hunter's back. Soon tired I of looking out upon the frozen earth, and then did I strive to write out in the French the incident which had my tutor narrated to us the night before. Yet would my thoughts most sadly wander from the task. At length I heard the door open, and looking up I beheld Sir Philip, who said to me:

"Walter, so soon as are the lessons at end, take thou the hunter and ride over to the home of Gammer Day, and learn how she doth after her great exposure of yesterday. Will the ride in truth be good for thee and the horse as well. Yet where is Don José—saw I not and spoke with him when I were here last?"

"But a short time since, sir," I made reply, "he took the hunter and rode toward Hillsbury."

"Then thou canst go to Gammer upon old Dick, unless it should chance thou art in the humor to take a ramble upon your own feet."

"May it please thee, sir, am I the more minded to gain warm glow by hastening on foot."

"Then be it so, Walter. Now," making with his fingers light taps upon his head, "are my feelings of most strange

fashion this morn. Yet thou didst say our old soldier hath ridden toward Hillsbury. Said he why he went thither?"

"Did he go, sir, with intent to fetch hither Doctor Rundle."

Gazed Sir Philip at me in wondering way for full a moment, and then he said:

"So he doth deem that I need aid from this same physician. Yet am I full certain he hath put himself to much pains from baseless fear." Then after he had stood with most grave mien for a moment placed he his hand in gentle way upon my shoulder, and looking full into my eyes, went he on thus: "Yet, my Walter, if it should come to pass that God in his wisdom shall see fit to take me hence, fail thou not to hold in mind thy duties in this life, as have I taught these same to thee."

Whereat did tears spring into my eyes; and I begged of him in broken words, since was I in truth much moved, that he should not think of leaving this bright world for many years yet. Then in soothing tone he said:

"There, there, my son, have I spoken touching this same matter only that when shall be fulfilled the number of my days, thou wilt remember this which have I just now spoken. There, there, hasten thou to old Gammer Day."

At this I left him to do as had he bidden me. When had I came to the woman's cottage, I found her lying well wrapped up before her fire, while was the red-haired daughter shaping dough into small cakes for the baking. Did Gammer in truth o'erwhelm me with much utterance of blessings upon my sire for that he had succored her in time of great peril. She bid me tell him that she

were in fair way of gaining riddance of the ill effects of her exposure. When had she asked if he showed aught of ailment through his ducking in the most chilly brook, and I had said that he spoke of a soreness throughout his frame, the Gammer vowed that she would pray from morn until the even for the full recovery of our true Knight of Merton. When had I borne her message, and named the things she spoke, unto Sir Philip, did he smile and say:

"Of a truth do such as she much magnify all that is done for them, as well as all that which may be wrought to their detriment. Yet do they recite these blessings and these wrongs just as they behold the same in their own minds." Became he more husky, as he said: "Grow I weak from some cause, my Walter; and am I minded to have rest of body. And though it be yet early in the day will I go now to my couch. Shalt thou come with me, and be for the nonce my lackey."

At this I grasped his arm and led him slowly to his chamber, where was a fire already kindled upon the hearth. When had I come to end of undressing him and had half lifted him upon his couch, did I tuck the clothing with much of care about him. Then I asked of him if he would like aught to drink, and did I call to his mind that there stood in his library a bottle yet half filled with the wine of the sort for which had he the most of liking. When had I made mention of this, did he nod his head. Then went I and fetched the bottle I had named, and with the same a glass. When had I come again into his chamber I poured out for him of this, and having propped him up upon his pillows, I placed in his hands the glass. Held he this for a moment, marking the redness of the wine, and then did he drain it. When had I taken from him

the glass and had smoothed into their place the pillows, sank his head once more upon the same. And now I asked of him if he were minded that I should remain nigh him in readiness for such service as might he stand in need of. Made he reply:

"Nay, my Walter, will I have no cause to call upon thee. And shall I the better rest alone."

Whereat I left the glass and bottle upon his table, and with light step passed from the room. Just as I in soft way began to close the door, glanced I back into the chamber. Then did I mark a look of much peacefulness upon my father's face. Had there some hours gone slowly by when came Don José at a gallop along the avenue, and by his side rode Doctor Rundle, a short and stout young man, who held beneath his flapping cloak a small chest of his own medicines. When had I told to them how Sir Philip had at his wish, and by my aid, been put to bed some hours gone by, Doctor Rundle shook his head in grave way, while my tutor put on an anxious look. Held I their horses for a moment till came up Joe, who as he took the bridles with a tremble on his old hands asked of me if the Knight of Merton were in truth so ill that he must have apothecary brought to him from such distance. Put I this old servant off with answer of evading kind, since did he in truth love well his master. Had there now come upon me much fear that was my sire's life in grave peril from his ailment. When came I within doors and had begun to mount the stairway leading to my sire's chamber, on my ear there fell the voice of Jane Edmunds, who spoke in lamentations that sent a chill unto my heart. Cried she out:

"Alack, alack, what have we lost! Shall we in truth

ne'er look to see so good a Knight again! How will this blow fall upon my poor Walter!"

Then after pause of one long moment, did I move with much swiftness till I came upon Jane standing without the opened door, through the which had I last seen my sire with peaceful look upon his face. Had her lament been made to Don José, who stood within the door. Were there tears in the eyes of this old soldier, who glanced at me in most pitying way, at same time speaking soothing words to the woman. Did Doctor Rundle stand by the couch on which I now saw my father's face, far whiter than had it ever looked before. Had he in truth died in painless way, no doubt within an hour after I, at his command, had from him withdrawn. And was there a smile upon his lips. Then burst I forth in many tears, albeit then having imperfect knowledge of the loss that had befallen me. Did Don José next take me by the arm, and whispering in my ear praises of the departed one, led he myself into my chamber. Here strove he long to soothe me, and did he at last cause my flow of tears to cease.

Was there grief for miles on every side of Merton Hall; and many were the tales told of his kindly words and gentle acts toward lowly ones. Did poor Gammer Day long lament that the saving of her own life had caused the taking off of so brave and so true a Knight.

Upon the third day after the death of my loved sire, held we his funeral at Merton Church. And came there to mourn him all his lowly friends with tears upon their cheeks. Likewise did there come from far as well as near his fellow-gentlefolk, who held him in great respect, albeit they had pitied much his poverty and had bemoaned his holding so aloof from those of his own kind. And Parson

Hayden for the once seemed in some measure to forget that before him sat they whose favor he dearly loved. Was there sadness in his face and a tremble in his voice while told he of the virtues of the good Knight who had gone to his reward. When bore they out my sire's coffin to the grave among the tombs of full many of my race, did we follow it, all in sorrow. Then they placed him next to his young wife.

Did it in the course of time come to pass, as in truth it rightly should, that Sir Philip's good deeds were noised abroad. And years thereafter came strangers to Merton church-yard, and asked where the Good Knight lay.

XII.

LEGACIES.

In the even after the funeral came Don José to me in my chamber, and said that next to the loss of his friend and patron, did it most grieve him to reflect that he and his dear pupil were now to part with small chance of further meetings. Since was there yet much of debt upon the estates of Merton was he full sure that the Courts of Law would place this same in other hands for a period. And had my sire once said to him that he were minded to name in his last will and testament as the fit and proper guardian of his son and heir a distant kinsman of his own, by name Sir Francis Wynnington, of Bidwell in the County of Surrey, in whom did he repose his confidence. Had there been in years gone by some transaction twixt Sir Philip and Sir Francis, wherein had my sire found his kinsman to be in truth a man of honor, and withal one who had much respect for his own conscience. And did Don José deem it as most like that I would be sent to dwell at Bidwell Hall until such a time as I should chance to come into mine own. When had he made clear to me his belief touching this matter, passed there throughout my frame a pleasing thrill; for was there in me a strong wish to see more of this world that lay about me, albeit was my love for Merton yet strong. Then the soldier perceived what was passing within my mind, and clapped he

myself upon the shoulder in pleasant way. With a laugh he now said:

"Art thou, my Walter, like every lad of spirit who hath been, is, or shall be, filled with joy at thought of departure from thy childhood's home. And was I in truth the self same way, though for the matter I waited not for my own sire's death, but ran away in secret fashion, being incited thereto by scent of battle, which was wafted to my eager nostrils from afar." Then paused he for a moment, and did his face grow of a grave aspect as with a sigh went he on thus: "Yet were there certain times ere had I come to full manhood, when I would have most gladly seen again my father's house, though would I from pride have made denial of this weakness."

On the morrow, while were Don José and myself having what in truth proved to be our last lesson with foils, came there in to us a servant, who said that Parson Hayden, with Sir Edward Bailey and Squire Harper, had wish to speak with me touching a matter of some importance. Whereat there walked into the room the three gentlemen, each of whom did in pleasant manner nod to myself. Then I saw the Parson glance at Don José in way which seemed to bespeak some joy at thought that the old Papist would now lose his pleasant home at Merton Hall, and the dominion over his pupil as well. Was the Knight a small man with fierce black eyes and a sharp nose, while was the Squire tall and portly with full red cheeks, yet with small features. Did the latter glance at Don José with naught of favor in his look, while Sir Edward scowled in angry way at the old soldier. And when he in courteous fashion bowed to the twain, made they no acknowledgment of this. Perceiving that were they

minded to look upon him in the way of what he deemed unjust contempt, there crept into the old man's face a haughty look, such as had I never noted there afore. Then came nigh to me Master Hayden in way of respect to which had I in truth not been used, and rubbing well his hands, he said:

"Have these good gentlemen, Sir Edward and Squire Harper," bowing to each one as made he mention of his name, "whom as dost thou know were honored friends of thy dear departed sire, come hither, honoring me meanwhile with their company, that they might look at the will and testament of Sir Philip, with view to aiding thee by having that same thing disposed of with all due regard to process of the Law."

Bowing to the Knight and Squire, made I some expression of thankful sort; and did I next turn to Don José and ask of him if he had knowledge of where this same writing had been placed by Sir Philip. Whereat, and before the soldier had the time in which to make reply, Sir Edward, frowning, said to him in harsh tones:

"If thou hast in thy possession this same instrument, and do not straightway yield it up, or if thou hast for purpose of thine own made alteration of aught therein, then shall we make appeal to the just Laws of England to have thee repaid——"

"'Sblood, man!" did Don José exclaim in way of interruption, his face pallid from his wrath. "Have I no knowledge of where that same writing may be found, and of a verity have I not laid eyes upon such. Yet will I say that in putting question to me in such way thou hast done to me injustice."

Now did he grasp foil with tighter hand, and return

with interest Sir Edward's scowl. And grew the face of Parson Hayden white, since he no doubt had now some fear of violence in his presence. Then in tone which had some of whining in it, he said to the soldier:

"Nay, nay, Don José, thou art wrong to speak thus, since has good Sir Edward spoken in this way but from excess of zeal for the rights and interests of our dear friend Walter."

"In truth," did Sir Edward now say, "was I incited in the way that our reverend friend hath named."

"Then," said the Parson, "will we now go and search for the testament in the library."

Whereat he left the room in company with Sir Edward and Squire Harper, who had been gazing with stupid wonder at him who had dared in such way to address his friend and neighbor. Was I about to follow them, when Don José placed his hand upon my shoulder, and said:

"Shall I now take my farewell of thee, good friend. Have we had many pleasant hours with one another. Art thou of the sort which pleaseth me; and I do love thee as did I thy dear sire. And in verity do I wish thee, Walter, all of happiness and true success through life." At this did he seize me in his arms and give to me most warm embrace.

"Yet, Don José," I urged, "why shouldst thou leave me in such hasty manner? Why not tarry yet a while?"

"'Sdeath!" he exclaimed with angry glance toward the door through which had Sir Edward gone away. "Though am I true follower of him they call the bloody Pope, yet would I not spill gore of Protestant this day! Farewell, my boy."

With that went the old soldier straight unto his apart-

ment, while bent I my steps toward the library. As came I in to my sire's friends, made they discovery of his last will, which was within a drawer set beneath a table. Then did the Parson open out the piece of parchment and look in learned way upon the same. Did neither of the others seem minded to glance at the testament save in curious way. Wisely left they the task of reading this same to Master Hayden, since were they themselves indifferent in way of learning.

"In the name of God, amen," began the Parson, reading slowly from the instrument; and pausing many times that he might make sure of words before giving utterance to the same. "To my only son and heir, Walter, who is by right of entail owner of the estates of Merton, subject to certain debts outstanding upon and against these same, do I bequeath such sums of money as I shall die possessed of, and all of my effects, save such as are hereinafter named. And are these latter things bequeathed, each to the person named as right receiver of the same. To Jane Edmunds, for some time the housekeeper at Merton Hall, I leave the wheel on which hath she spun with much of skill, together with the large chest of drawers in which kept she with so much of neatness the linen. To Joe Higgs, my old and faithful servant, I leave the gardener's tools, which hath he long used well, together with my second-best saddle and harness, and likewise the old horse Dick, should this faithful beast be yet alive. To my friend, Don José de Madura, I leave——"

Here did the Parson pause, as if to make out some word; and took Sir Edward advantage of this to say, as if unto himself, yet loud enough to reach my ears:

"Knew I right well that this same fellow was in for an

inheritance, for the which may he have used sorcery, or mayhap forgery."

"I leave, went on he who read the testament, "as token of my gratitude for his great kindness to my son, the old Missal which hath been in Merton Hall since before the Eighth Henry sent defiance unto Rome."

"Humph," did Sir Edward mutter in way that seemed to betoken somewhat of disappointment that this same legacy was one of such small value. "Hath the Spaniard contrived to have this very thing bequeathed to him that he may use the same for evil purpose, mayhap for sorcery directed gainst they of our faith. Should this Popish thing have been burned long since."

In the items of the will that then followed, Sir Philip did bequeath unto his servants and others many of his effects which had in truth small value, save that they were reminders of him who gave them. And, as had Don José gave intimation, was named as my guardian, and also to administer the provisions of the will, Sir Francis Wynnington of Bidwell in the County of Surrey. In way of some importance did Sir Edward take the parchment from the Parson, saying that he would see to it that this same was conveyed, with as much of speed as were right and fitting, to Sir Francis Wynnington, to the end that he might at once have the instrument proven with due regard to Law. When had I given thanks to them for their kindly efforts in my behalf, my sire's friends departed. Found I that had Don José packed up in the old box his few effects, and had left Merton Hall. Some hours thereafter came two stout fellows, who dwelt near Hillgate, and who bore away this same box. On the morrow had I the wish to again see my old tutor, and rode I over to Hillgate.

Did I find at home Sir Harry Bullard, who first gave expression of much sorrow at my sire's death, and then told me that I had come too late to see my friend, since had he taken his departure at daybreak, being minded to journey unto the castle of an old companion at arms in Portugal. Might it in truth be many months ere he should chance to come this way again. I made mention to him of the small bequest to Don José. Whereat Sir Harry assured me that the old man would most truly put high value on this, or aught else which might Sir Philip have bequeathed to him in way of remembrance. And said he as well that he would strive to inform him of this thing.

On the eighth day thereafter came Sir Francis Wynnington to Merton Hall. Was this Knight a tall, fair man with large beard and small hands. Wore he fine apparel, and was he of look proud, and as well thoughtful. I thereafter found him to be a man who could not with full intent wrong any one; and in truth was there about his eye that which plainly bespoke this same thing. Did he shake his head in most grave way when had he looked over the papers and accounts touching the indebtedness on the estates of Merton. Then for weeks came there nigh to every day some one in regard to the settlement of our affairs. Were there men of Law, some sleek of appearance and well brushed as to their apparel, while had others a most rusty look. For the most part had they clients who urged claims upon poor Merton, and were they well armed with writs. The ending of this all were that 'twas agreed their clients should have Merton Hall, to let unto a certain merchant of wealth for some years, and as well the rents of the estates until I should be of full age. And

meanwhile from out these rents were to be paid each year to my guardian, Sir Francis, for my own maintenance the sum of sixty guineas; and was I to dwell with that Knight at Bidwell Hall.

When were this made known to the Parson did he come and assure me that Fortune was most kind in thus sending me to remain beneath the roof of such a gentleman, whose noble ways 'twould be in my power to close study and strive to copy. Had Master Hayden been at much pains to gain the favor of Sir Francis by acts of humility toward him and by offers of flattery. Did my kinsman accept all this as his full due; and for a time seemed he to find somewhat of pleasure in the same. Yet the Parson came so often unto the Knight to such end, that seemed the latter at length to sicken of this thing; and wore he face like one who has had surfeit of sweets whene'er came this his courtier into his presence. Showed Jane Edmunds great respect toward Sir Francis, yet with more of reason in this same. And was it by his interest that she gained the place of housekeeper at Springwell Hall in Sussex. And there dwelt she in contentment for full a score of years thereafter. Wept the good soul when she parted with me one frosty morn. Then mounted upon a poor hack, our hunter having fallen into the hands of the men of Law, did I in company with my kinsman ride forth from Merton's gates upon this my first journey.

XIII.

QUIMBY COURT.

Upon the road did Sir Francis converse with me in pleasant way at times; then would he for long whiles keep silence, being no doubt busied with his own reflections. Once, as he loosened his cloak, which was thicker and far more rich of fabric than my own, he said:

"Is my son about your age and height. Though this young kinsman is not of thy way of speech or manner, being most sadly spoiled by his dear mother, who hath never heeded my commands touching this matter, yet doth the young scapegrace bear the self same name as thyself. So, is it like that some day there shall be two Sir Walters, the one of Kent, and the one of Surrey. And do I now beg of thee, Walter of Kent, that thou shalt strive to set good example unto Walter of Surrey."

"May it please thee, sir," I made reply, "will I do my best in way thou dost point out. And yet mayhap there will be things in which I would do well in taking pattern after thy son."

"I fear not, my young kinsman, for hast thy sire looked with far more of care to thy breeding than have I to that of my Walter. And moreover would I say 'tis better to have no mother, as hath it been with thee, than to have one o'er indulgent. Yet hath my boy in truth a right

good tutor, and from this man of learning shalt thou gain knowledge as well."

After had I thanked Sir Francis for his kindly offer seemed he long to be lost in his own thoughts. Paused we for dinner at a pleasant inn, where the good host's stout and red-cheeked wife were no doubt of firm belief that I had fasted long, for did she ever urge me to eat more. And when could I not for want of room within me relieve my plate from all its fullness, brought she to me of still other dishes and begged me to partake of these. As drew near the nightfall did we turn aside from the highway with intent to lay till morn at a certain hostel Sir Francis knew of, and where he said were we sure of good cheer. Yet when passed we by a narrow path around the base of one small, steep hill, we saw much smoke; and then we came upon the blackened ruins of the place to which had we looked for shelter through the night. Stood there about some charred floor-beams a throng of gazers, while behind such were others upon horseback. Of the latter, one who sat astride a large brown hunter, was stout of build, with a full red face which wore a look of much cheerfulness. Perceived this one Sir Francis, and riding up to him did he offer his hand and exclaim in loud tone and most hearty manner:

"Glad indeed am I to see thee, my old friend! And tell me, prithee, what chance has brought thee hither. Surely 'twas not thine intent to lie this night in that same Lion Inn which is no longer."

"Was I indeed so minded, Sir Peter," replied my kinsman.

"So, so; and the youth with thee—thy son?"

"Nay; is he in truth my ward, the son of good Sir Philip Wynnington, whom thou hast doubtless seen."

"Right glad am I to greet thee, my young friend," said the stout Knight, at same time seizing with grasp of iron my hand, the which it seemed to me he were crushing, though was I for sake of manners forced to reply to his salutation in smiling way, as if this same thing were pleasing to me. "Have I in faith seen thy good sire, albeit must I declare he were given in most sad way to neglect his hunting and as well his drinking. And," turning to Sir Francis, "thou and the youth as well are houseless to-night by reason of the burning of the inn?"

"I fear me that we are both like to be put to some straits by this same burning."

"Then right glad am I the thing has come to pass!" did the other with loud laugh exclaim. "Would I in faith have set torch to the place with mine own hands to bring this thing about, since now art thou both forced to accept such hospitality as shall Sir Peter Poole offer thee at Quimby Court."

"Art thou now at Quimby—thy wife's inheritance?"

"In faith, Sir Francis, do we find Quimby by reason of its shelter far better for the winter than is my Yardsley Hall."

"Then, Sir Peter, will we need no urging to see for ourselves how Quimby Court may be sheltered."

"Though are my sons too small to amuse thee," said Sir Peter turning his glance upon myself, "yet have I one fair daughter, by name of Amy, who in faith is of ripe years—at least for such as thee. And hath she with her as a guest one of her own age, and as well a charmer. If she the daughter of one proud Baron. Oh, thou shalt

see her, and betwixt the twain will they not leave unto thee sufficient of thine own heart for thine own use."

Whereat did Sir Peter laugh in his hearty fashion, and putting spurs with gentle touch upon his horse he rode, with Sir Francis beside him, toward Quimby Court, while I followed close upon them. As we passed on Sir Peter related at top of voice certain of his feats upon the hunting field, and as well in way of drinking at his own and others' boards. And was his laughter full as frequent as were his oaths. Nor did he seem in least to mind it that my kinsman was full content to listen, and made no attempt to interrupt with tales of his own prowess. At length, when had fully come upon the earth the darkness, rode we up to Quimby Court, which lay in one narrow vale where had the wind small chance to sweep. Bright were the gleams that came from out the windows; and was the warmth we found within of welcome kind. Began Sir Peter upon his ale the moment we had passed the doors, and did he press a large glass of this same upon my kinsman, while was I forced to swallow some mouthfuls. Had it a most bitter taste, and for it did not Sir Francis or myself have aught of liking. Yet our host, betwixt his draughts, pointed out in words its virtues and said that it were of his own brewing. Presently came we into the dining-hall, where awaited us the Lady Poole, to whom was presented my kinsman and myself. While was I making my bow, the which seemed to impresss her in my favor, two fair maids of the age of about fifteen years came in, each with arm around the other's waist. One was of much plumpness, and in her bright face I saw a likeness to Sir Peter. Was this his own daughter Amy. Had the other more beauty, and shone her eyes like brilliants. In

truth was this none other than my old charmer, Maud de Wycherly. And did that fair maid seem quickly to perceive that there stood before her the one time victim of her art and cruelty. Did she look at me in hesitating way, as if she doubted whether I would be minded to forgive her for the sharp stabs with the which had she wounded my tender feelings last time we met. Yet when had I made it plain to her by kindly glance that within me no thoughts of vengeful kind yet lurked, she smiled at me in winning way. When had I been presented with all meet ceremony unto the fair ones, did Maud say to me in tone of pleading:

"I know, Walter, that thou wilt pardon the unkind things which I spoke to thee that afternoon among the trees. In faith I meant not so much as one of all the hateful words I uttered."

"Why should I treasure up thy sharp words," made I reply, "when before those thou didst speak so many to me that were pleasant."

Then as her eyes shone in the old bright fashion she said that I had much of the look of Sir Philip, whom 'twas her sorrow that she saw not more of when dwelt they at Hazel Lodge, since had she for him so much of admiration. And came it into my mind as she spoke thus that in her heart was she then planning to ensnare me to end that I might again minister to her vanity, and mayhap be of service to her when in a cruel mood she might have need of one to wound. Yet having perceived her real nature, could not her artful ways cause her to seem now what she had once looked to be in my boyish eyes. So were her wiles wasted upon myself, and her power gone. And thus it was I looked at her with admiration in my

eyes, yet with caution in my heart. Were we soon seated at the board, which was covered with good things. The blessing was asked in loud voice by our host, and meanwhile his eye rested in loving way upon a tall flask of most red wine, which stood convenient to his hand. Dwelt he next upon the beauties of this same vintage, urging Sir Francis, who sat beside him, to frequent replenishments of his glass, and adding full oft to precept the beauty of example. Was my kinsman little minded to great indulgence of this fashion, since had he in truth not been formed or designed by nature for much in way of drinking. Yet whene'er he seemed to feel it duty towards his host to raise glass to lips did he not show the same aversion as when had he partook of Sir Peter's much beloved ale. Was some of this same wine set before me, as sat I betwixt the two fair maids. And were they in turn given small glasses of wine, which would they sip in most dainty fashion. Since was I of the stronger sex did I deem it meet to quaff to their good health in larger draughts than had they seen fit to take. And could I do this thing with more of readiness, since had our host spoke no false praise of this vintage, for was his wine in truth of a most pleasing flavor. The Lady Poole drank in small way of her wine, saying naught, yet ever beaming in gracious way upon her two guests. As had the wine let loose in measure my tongue, I spoke in gallant fashion to both of these maids, dividing into most equal parts the flattery of word and look for the which had they much liking, as was it most natural they should.

Did not Maud seem o'erpleased to note that was directed full one-half of my attention to Amy Poole. Yet this other youthful charmer in her merry eyes gave ex-

pression of her pleasure at the thought that she had won from this young gallant as full a share of homage as had her fairer rival. And would I from time to time perceive one directing at the other, and across my shoulder, a glance of mock defiance. Had Sir Peter between his emptying of glasses said much, and in no squeamish terms, of a certain Squire whom he now had as neighbor. And did his voice gain in its compass, till it seemed as if the hall shook. At length the Lady Poole deemed the time fit for her retirement with her Amy and Maud as well from the board. And when had she arisen, and was her example followed by the youthful twain, did Sir Francis and myself rise to our feet and bow to them. Then we both made as if we would follow them to the room where were they minded to sit yet a while. But did our host shake his head and cry out:

"Nay, nay, Sir Francis, shalt thou not now leave, for in faith have we not yet begun to drink!" Then my poor guardian with faint look of disappointment upon his face sank back into his seat. Next directing at me his glance Sir Peter went on thus: "Yet would I not tear thee, my young friend, away from that lovely twain, for would they be avenged upon me for this thing."

When had he said this he burst forth into a loud laugh, and did each maid blush and glance at me in arch way, as if to tell me that had she no thought of making denial of this same imputation. I took occasion now to question Maud touching her parents and her brothers, and she in careless tone replied:

"Oh, do I not recall that there was aught amiss with them when I saw them last."

"Thou cruel one!" now burst forth Amy, shaking

finger in mock reproach at Maud. "Didst thou not promise to send to me thy brother Henry, who in faith is greatly to my liking."

As said she this the maid glanced at me in searching way, as if she fain would see upon my face some look that would bespeak small jealousy at hearing her thus praise another youth. But I added my own praises of the heir of the house of de Wycherly to that which had she already uttered. Whereat did she quickly drop the matter. Led they the way into a rich apartment; and was I right glad that Sir Peter had not been minded to keep me by him at his board, since Amy now uncovered a harp. Upon the strings of this played she with deft fingers, bringing forth from the same music that thrilled me. Then went to her Maud, who standing by the harp and in company with its notes, lifted up her tuneful voice in song. Sat I long enraptured by the strains of voice and chord, and gazing at the fair musicians. Yet though I beheld them with my eyes, my thoughts wandered from them; and when did the music sound most sweetly in my ear, beheld I in fancy one small maid, who had dwelt much within my thoughts, though absent beyond seas for many months. 'Twas Constance Leigh, looking for all the world as when last were I by her at Clayton Hall. Yet when had at length the music come to end, by reason of the weariness of Amy's fingers and of Maud's soft voice, did I not deem it wise to name unto the fair ones the truth that had their notes raised up for me the image of a younger and a dearer maid than they. Was I most earnest in my praise of the sweet sounds that had filled my ears, while they in modest fashion declared that I strove but to flatter them, since indeed was their performance most indifferent of

kind. I should have heard this one play upon the harp, said Amy; and should I have heard that one sing, said Maud; and then would I know what true music was. Yet did I contradict them in most firm and determined way, saying I knew full well what delightful music was, since had I that self same even listened to such with enchanted ears. Nor did they seem to take it ill that I had gone to length of disputing their own words.

As sat we for some while longer in converse was I yet minded to make equal showing of respect unto them both. At length when chanced I to turn my glance toward Maud, perceived I that she looked at me with eye of displeasure, no doubt for reason that I had not been minded to return with readiness under the old spell in the which she in former days had held me. Yet did it seem to me she might have weighed the truth that 'twas she herself who broke this spell by most cruel words. And might she not in reason now hope to have the same made new again. When rose the fair twain to retire, did Maud nod to me in most cold and distant fashion, scarce moving her lips as bade she me good-night. Yet did Amy bow and smile to me in most winning way, with secret thought no doubt that she were thus completing my enslavement. Were I now alone, since had the Lady Poole retired without my notice while was I lost to all save the enchantment of the music. Was I about to mount unto the chamber which had been set apart for my use, when came there in to me a serving man, who said that my guardian, who was yet at Sir Peter's board, would have speech with me. Found I Sir Francis with his head sank upon his breast, and with half-closed eyes gazing downward in vacant way. But was Sir Peter seated with most red face, and with a

great glass of his own bitter ale nigh to his hand, while gazed he with loving eye upon his guest, whom had he, by frequent urgings to drink, brought to this state of wretchedness. Then said my host, who had changed his loud tones to a hoarse whisper of much confidence:

"Hath my dear friend, thy guardian, just now expressed the wish that he might be conveyed unto his couch. And 'twere well so, for in faith hath he been but poor company this hour, declining with wry face my good ale when were we minded to take no more wine. Now 'tis a precept of my own, that when is a gentleman o'ertaken in his drink, which thing will of times happen to the best and goodliest of us, should he be put to bed by no serving man, so long as there be at hand some kinsman of his own who may do this loving office with kindly hands." When had he said this did Sir Peter's eyes shine with a soft and gentle light. Then in graver tone he went on: "And when thou hast done this, shall I most surely look to thee to return to me, since are there in faith some words which I do wish to say to you."

When had I assured my host that I would respect his wishes touching this matter, I did arouse my guardian and lead him with tottering step to his chamber. There, by reason of his excess in way of limpness and his constant strife to gain proneness of position, was I long time in getting him to bed. Yet when I returned unto my host, had he naught to say to me. For lay he back asleep in his chair, with hand yet touching his ale glass, the which were empty. And was there a peaceful look upon his red countenance, while did he most loudly snore.

Went I to my chamber with much thought of pity for my guardian, who was now in truth the poor victim of a

hospitality which had he not been minded to refuse. Was I awakened on the morrow by a cheery voice without. Arising I glanced through my window; and then perceived I Sir Peter, who seemed to then speak some friendly words of approval unto his brown hunter, which was held by a small and slender groom, who as well showed great fondness for the horse. As the groom led away the hunter my host turned about, and then caught I full glimpse of his face. This now had upon it a fresh and smiling look, in which to my eye serene contentment seemed to have its place. Yet did I behold a far different expression of the countenance when went I in to my kinsman to offer him my aid as lackey. I found him half dressed and seated on the bed. Was his mien now of sort that bespoke deep reflection of melancholy kind. When asked I of him if he were ailing in any way, gave he utterance to a faint groan, and said in reply that comfort and ease of feeling were far from him just then. At which I did counsel him to go back to bed and there remain until he felt his wonted freshness and vigor return to him. But shook he his head in way of much firmness as he made this reply:

"Nay, nay, my boy; it matters not I feel most weak and am of unsteady nerve, for would I get hence at once. Grieve I to tear thee away from the two comely young damsels with whom, I doubt not, thou hast the wish to tarry yet another day. Yet didst thou last night behold my martyrdom, to the which was I minded to submit but for sake of courtesy. And is it in truth my wish and strong desire to place as quickly as I may some leagues twixt me and the fumes of my good host's most bitter ale."

When had he with my aid finished dressing, gave he direction that I should go down to our host, while tarried

he yet longer with intent to gain more of strength. As came I to the foot of the carved stairway was I greeted in loud voice by Sir Peter, who asked me touching the condition of my guardian. And when had I said he were not over strong, yet would he appear in some few moments, did my host exclaim:

"In faith will a day's rest be of much profit to Sir Francis. And am I minded to keep him here, and on the morrow take him with me unto Squire Gardner, who hath assured his neighbors of a most pleasing hunt."

Just then came in to my host two of his serving men, both past the prime, who wore most sleepish looks. One, with white hair around the edge of his bald crown, was full as red of face as was his master. Had the other long gray locks, and much pallor upon his countenance. Gazed Sir Peter at the twain with look of great severity for a moment, and then cried he out:

"Thou varlets! Wast thou, Jack," to the pale one, "found sleeping at thy post when should'st thou have kept thy watch o'er Quimby Court; and is it in faith more to thy shame that thou didst this thing when thou wast in thy sober senses, and not lost in drunkenness."

"Have pity on me, Sir Peter," did Jack plead, albeit in most clumsy fashion, breaking and twisting his words, "had I within me many cups of most strong ale when sat I down to rest my legs, and afore I knew it was I asleep."

"There thou liest foully!" shouted Sir Peter," for so much art thou used to guzzle strong ales that in all Quimby is there not sufficient of this same to give thee excuse of drunkenness."

Whereat did the poor man blubber out with many tears that had he his old wife and sick widowed daughter to care

for, and 'twould go hard with them indeed should Sir Peter turn him forth from Quimby. Without giving Jack reply, did my host turn in wrathful way unto him of the bald head, and exclaim:

"But was thou, Dick, scoundrel as thou art, most truly and completely drunk when shouldst thou have been mending fires. Hence were we chilled and starved when should we in faith have had warmth and comfort. Hast thou aught to say for thyself?"

"But show me pity, Sir Peter," urged this man in eager way, and looking at his fellow from out the corners of his eyes, "would I most truly not have been drunk, had it not been that Jack kept urging upon me cup after cup of most strong ale; and did he well night use force to cause me to take the same."

Did Jack now give the other servant a reproachful glance, and again burst he in tears and cast down his eyes, while thundered at him his master in this way:

"I wonder not thou fear'st to look me in the face. That thou shouldst have the heart to urge to drunkenness poor Dick, who is in faith forgiven, and may go his ways." With look of great relief did Dick not pause for thanks, but hurried straightway from the presence of his master. "Jack, thou mak'st it in truth most hard for me to keep myself within control. When weigh I again the wickedness of thy action touching our Dick, can I not exercise that same control." Here did the worthy Knight shake fist with much of vigor at the culprit, and bestow upon him a long string of oaths, which had effect to relieve in part his wrath, for then went he on in milder tone: "Yet for the sake of thy old wife and sick widowed daughter shalt thou and Quimby not part this time. But if thou

dost this same thing again, or shouldst thou be caught in sleep once more at time of watch, then out shalt thou and thy poor ones go. Now get thee from my sight!"

Paused not Jack to so much as wipe his eyes, but went he off with speed like that of Dick's. While was Sir Peter lamenting o'er the worriment that oftimes came to him through fault of his own servants, my guardian made his appearance. And did he not, to my mind, take with much of kindness to the hearty slaps upon the back that were given him by his host, who swore it were high time that we should break the fast. Upon the board were, beside the round of beef, and the bread, a jug of Sir Peter's ale and a flask of wine. As Sir Francis perceived the jug, with its frothy mouth, his glance bespoke most unhappy thought. And when had his host poured out glasses of this same drink, was one offered to him. Begged my guardian to be spared the ale and the meat as well, saying that a portion of a loaf, together with a small draught of wine would be sufficient for him. At this Sir Peter gazed upon his guest with eyes of wonder. Yet did he, albeit with a grave shake of head, yield in this to my guardian. When had our host devoured some great slices of the beef, the which had he washed down with much ale, found he the time to unfold unto Sir Francis his plans for disposing of him for the morrow. But my guardian in firm way refused to tarry longer, saying he had in hand a certain business which would brook no putting off, and that should he not reach Bidwell that same night, would evil surely come of the delay. With much of regret upon his face, Sir Peter made avowal that he would now be forced to grant his guests leave to depart. And some little time thereafter did we mount our horses, while was our host loudly calling

out to us that we should each have stirrup-cup. Then when had he asked to be permitted to go without the same, was Sir Francis urged to come to Quimby when had he the time for hunting. Did I now perceive at an upper window Amy, who waved unto me a farewell, the which made I effort to acknowledge in gallant way. Was not Maud de Wycherly in view, yet did not I feel punished in that she were not minded to wish me well at my departure.

XIV.

BIDWELL HALL.

When had we passed beyond the gates of Quimby did my guardian sigh in way of relief, and then say:

"Thou didst note, Walter, that in making my excuses to Sir Peter, I urged most pressing business. In saying this same thing told I downright untruth. Was thy sire averse to all falsehood; yet as thy guardian will mine own conscience acquit me if I tell thee there is no wrong in the utterance of lies like to this in thine own defence. For in truth, had my friend held me at his disposal until to-morrow night, within a week would thy young kinsman at Bidwell be master of that to which is he now but heir."

Had Sir Francis little more to say upon our journey, albeit did he slowly cast off his looks of melancholy. And had he more of appetite when dined we at the Oak Tree Inn. Was darkness upon us as rode we up the avenue at Bidwell. When had we come unto the Hall, I perceived that this was built in much the same fashion as Merton, though were it the larger one. And within doors was there far more to attract than in the well nigh barren floors and walls which had I seen from childhood. Was my guardian greeted by the Lady Wynnington with somewhat of coldness, as it seemed to me. Were she intent with her son Walter, who was a large and awkward youth, with a full, woman-like face of great fairness, and light blue

eyes. Did he bear much of resemblance unto his mother, and seemed it as if had she wish to forever rest her eyes upon him. Since had I in modesty kept in the background, Sir Francis called out to myself that he were minded to present me to his wife and his heir. As I advanced, bowing in respectful way, did my Lady scan me in suspicious manner, and then seem to compare me with her offspring, while telling me in tone which lacked warmth that I were welcome at Bidwell. But young Surrey Walter greeted me in more hearty way, clasping my hand and saying we would have much of sport together. And now did I perceive a change in Lady Wynnington toward myself. Were she no doubt by this time in her own mind well assured that were I not the equal of her own son. Then she smiled upon me, albeit in pitying way, and in a tone which to my ear had much of softnesss, she said:

"Poor boy, to think thou hadst the misfortune to lose thy mother at such an age. And yet art thou grown, and do seem to comport thyself right well for one of thy years. Is it most strange to me; for am I sure my loved Walter would never have lived without his dear mother. Oftimes have I much trembled at the thought of mine own death, since could not my boy live without me."

Then did she turn to her son and lavish upon him endearing words and kisses, which he received without showing aught of thankfulness. While was I noting this had Sir Francis sent a servant to summon him who were now to be tutor to the two Walters. Was his name Charles Hackett, and was he of person short and meagre, albeit strong and with power to endure much. Dark was his hue, and was his nose of great size, and curved like to a

Turkish blade. Was there ever upon his face, when chanced he to be among those whom he deemed to be his betters, a pleasant and respectful smirk. When had he come in to us and had grasped the hand of his new pupil, he said:

"Ahah, my other Walter, hast thou fallen in good hands. Shalt thou be taught much by myself. Who hadst thou for thy tutor 'ere thou cam'st to Bidwell?" When had I informed him touching Master Hayden and Don José did he laugh softly and speak thus: "Thy Parson knew his prayers, the which had he by heart, else would it have availed him naught to open book."

"Nay, sir," did I interrupt; "would I with all due respect wish and endeavor to make clear to thee that our Parson could read right well of print or writing, which had he not once before set eyes on."

"This is well, my new pupil," went he on, "I like to see thee make such defence of this thy old tutor. I said that in mere way of figure, since of a verity he knew well how both to write and read. Yet would I be sworn thou wilt learn here many things which Hayden dreamed not of. And thy Papist did no doubt learn thee to fence well, which art shalt thou teach to thy fellow pupil. And will we find out what manner of French and Spanish this same Don, as he called himself, hath taught thee."

Had supper been prepared in some haste for Sir Francis and myself, and to the same sat we down, while the others kept us company, though had they already partaken of the evening meal. And yet did I note that Master Hackett was in skilful way popping into his mouth many morsels of food, while at same time he paid court unto

the Knight and Lady, and as well showed some of respect to the two Walters. Upon her son was the mistress of Bidwell the whole time intent, asking of him each moment if he were not minded to have taste of this or that. Yet would he not reply beyond a shake of head and yawnings, while did he gaze on me in pleasant albeit somewhat sleepy way. Sat my guardian with look of much contentment upon his face as he sipped of wine and water, after had he partook of sufficient food. At length turned he to myself and said:

"Am I somewhat endowed with philosophy, and have I in that same light perceived that, after we have been for a while in misery, is the sense of our relief at escape from the same, a true pleasure. Doth it make us regret no longer what we already had gone through to earn that relief. And so can I this night, assured of comfort and of freedom, look back in pleasant way upon the torture and captivity which had I yester night at hands of good Sir Peter."

On the morrow, after had I awoke, refreshed from the night's slumber in the large and pleasant chamber which had been set apart for me, did I descend the stairs and find waiting for me Walter of Surrey. Broke we our fast together, talking in merry way of the sports which should we have without-doors when it were again the Spring-time. When had come the hour for lessons, went we unto the room where Master Hackett oft gave utterance to his wisdom. Was he already there and in waiting for us with his pleasant smirk. Did he rub his hands in way of one who looks forward to much of pleasure. Then began he by saying that he would now weigh in the scales the knowledge of my former tutors, and that meanwhile would

Walter of Surrey gain wisdom by using well his ears. Yet was not my young kinsman then minded to do this thing, since had there just entered his head the thought that it were a pleasant morn for a ride upon the back of his new horse Tom, and that with myself for company upon my poor hack, might he reap more of pleasure than in the way his tutor did propose. When had he given expression to his thoughts touching this matter, our tutor with grave face said:

"My Walter, dost not think 'twould be better for thee now to give thyself unto the studies which will make thee wise, than to waste these same moments in sport which thou canst have at its fit and proper time?"

"Nay, nay," the youth made reply, "have I no wish to do as thou would'st have me, but rather would I be on Tom's back. And so shall I be, say what thou wilt, and shall our new Walter bear me company."

"Then go thyself, my boy, but shall thou leave me here thy kinsman, so that I may instruct him while thou art absent."

"Yet say I he shall come with me!" cried out the heir of Bidwell; and then giving his tutor a look of defiance, he ran from out the room.

"Is it ever thus with the boy," said Master Hackett with a sigh, "when yield I not to him goes he unto my Lady Wynnington to make complaint. Will it be loss of time for us to begin now the business which I had named."

Paced he the room for some few moments with look of vexation in the place of his wonted smirk, which in truth would have the more become it. Then of a sudden did he change again his look to one of submission, as there came into the room the mistress of Bidwell with arm around

her son, who walked with her and glanced at his tutor in way of triumph. Did my Lady wear injured look, as said she to the tutor:

"How canst thou be so severe, Hackett? Doth my Walter wisely desire to ride upon the back of his new and gentle horse, while is the weather fine. Dost thou not think he might with ease make good the hour's loss another day?"

"May it please thee, madam," said he in extenuation, "Have I not opposed thy Walter's going, further than to ask of him if it were not better to attend to lessons. I did next merely say that my new pupil should remain with me for instruction."

"Why art thou so severe on Kentish Walter? Should he be held here to his tasks while his fellow pupil canters long the highway or cross the fields. Shouldst thou not show unto my son more of favor in this way than to t'other youth."

"Then, madam, if thou art thus minded to have them given this playspell, will I with pleasure close the books, and will myself take a brisk walk across the fields."

"Yet, Hackett, why is it that I must ever reason with thee touching this matter ere thou wilt grant the most fit and natural requests of my dear son?"

Whereat gazed she with much of reproach upon the tutor, who no doubt perceiving that his replies were like to avail him naught, was wisely silent, albeit looking upon her yet in submissive way. Spoke she next some most endearing words to her son, and did she follow up this with caress and kisses. When had she left the room Master Hackett spoke to his pupils in kindly tone, and with his best smirk vowed that he would find more pleasure

than should we in this respite from studies. And now did I fancy that Surrey Walter was not glad to note his tutor's seeming pleasure in our thus taking a ride abroad in lesson time. Would the youth no doubt have now changed his mind and set some other time for our canter, were it not he deemed it most unwise to yield by the breadth of one single hair unto the wishes of his tutor. Went then the two young Wynningtons upon their ride. Though was his new horse of most gentle disposition, having been by his loving mother chosen with end to safety of her son, yet did Tom far outstrip my hack that still had upon it the weariness of two days of journeying. And did this same thing cause much of delight to my companion, who would laugh with much of heartiness at myself, when looking o'er his shoulder he beheld me long ways behind. At last having left me at more than wonted distance from him did he laugh with so much of glee, and so sway his body, that when the beast of a sudden stumbled he lost his seat and fell to the earth. Whereat Tom paused and looked down upon his master as if in affright. Did Surrey Walter slowly rise and begin to rub his arm in way which seemed to bespeak much of pain. When had I come up with him saw I tears in his eyes. Then he said in tone that was in truth well nigh a sob.

"'Twas a wonder I were not killed by this same fall, which was all from the fault of Tom in stumbling as he did. If this thing should come to my mother's ears, would she not again permit me to ride in saddle. Is there a most frightful bruise upon my arm, for fell I on it with all my weight."

Had I alighted, and now on turning up for him the sleeve of his right arm I discovered some few scratches

and a raw spot about the size of his own thumb-nail. When had I assured him fully that this would quickly heal, and that the smart would soon leave his arm did he, in secret way which escaped me not, wipe from his eyes the tears. Then we both mounted and rode on, though would he not again that morn invite me to a race. Though at first had I wondered at these signs of what I deemed unmanly weakness, yet when came I to weigh the matter, I perceived that this thing was due in large part to his mother's heedless acts, by the which had he been spoiled. And came then to me the thought that I myself might have been as weak had I known naught save indulgence at the hands of an unwise mother. Had my companion well nigh regained his wonted spirits when we reached the Hall. At dinner ate he in way that would some sharp tongues have named as ravenous. When was it a full hour past the noon I asked him if he had wish to go with me to Master Hackett. With a long yawn did he shake his head and say he was minded to have a good nap. Now bent I my steps toward the lesson-room, where greeted me in most pleasant way our tutor, who asked how had we enjoyed our ride. Nor did he seem to mind it that his other pupil had not this time sought his guidance. With smile of one who makes show of his own knowledge by drawing forth another's ignorance, he said:

"Now will I have opportunity to learn if this Don of thine had right knowledge of the French and Spanish tongues. Are there many of the lower orders in Spain and France who speak a strange corruption of their native forms of languge, which may not be found in any books nor might be understood by they of gentle breeding. Mayhap thy old tutor hath been reared mid those who

spoke in a debased fashion. Will I now put this matter to the test by asking of thee certain questions, first giving the same in French and then in Spanish."

Then spoke he many words which seemed most strange unto my ear, though did some few of these bear resemblance of faint kind to the French as I knew this. Yet of his meaning had I no knowledge. When had he perceived from my manner that I were at great loss to comprehend his questions, did he smile in way of triumph. Next he uttered many more strange words, together with some few that might have made claim to most distant kinship with the Spanish. When had he paused, and looked at me as if for answer, made I reply, first in French and then in Spanish that naught had I understood of all which he had said. Looked he at myself in way of much perplexity; and when had I repeated the salf same words in the two tongues, he exclaimed:

"My boy, what manner of speech is this, which I take it thy Don hath taught thee, and which thou has just now given utterance to?"

Then I said in English what had I before twice spoken in the words of both France and Spain. Did he look at me with eyes well opened in their wonder; and then with many shakes of head, and withal somewhat of satisfaction in the lines upon his countenance, went he on in this way:

"Have I now been given full proof that the Papist fellow, who for some time partook of thy sire's bounty, hath taught thee naught but a strange jumble of words, that have sound, yet no meaning, or at best are the language of the debased orders."

Paid he no heed to the many things I spoke and urged in the defence of my French and Spanish. At length he

showed to me a book much worn and soiled in its pages, and which contained the French and Spanish words in common use, together with their meaning in the English, and as well some rules for the use of these same. Pointed he out to me word after word which had he uttered, and demanded if he had not made use of the right terms. 'Twere vain to strive to make clear to him that had his accent been of such rude and imperfect fashion that no one might comprehend his speech. He declared that the book had in it rules of accent, and that by following these had he pronounced each single word in its fit way. Next wrote he down some few lines in the foreign tongues, and asked of me to give to him the English for these. Yet such were his ways of placing into groups his words, and in writing down these same, that was I at loss to know what he had writ. Then, once more with look of triumph, he cried:

"Again have I caught thee, my good Walter. Yet is the fault not thine, but thy tutor's. With instruction of fit sort wilt thou learn much. In truth will I make of thee a real scholar of the languages of France and Spain. Now write down for me some lines in same way as have I done for thee."

Whereat did I put down in writing of most plain kind lines of the sort for which had he asked. Then took he his book and long vainly strove to find the English meaning of these same. When had he at length perceived this thing were well beyond his powers, he spoke thus:

"Am I now most fully sustained. For if thou hadst writ down these things in proper language of they of Spain and France, would I have been able with much of ease to put the same in English."

Most plainly did I now perceive how idle were it to dispute further with him touching his error, yet was I not minded to let him go without one parting shot, and to this end I said:

"Mayhap as well Don José hath been wrong in the matter of his rules and ways of fencing. Though thou seem'st to have thought him well enough at this same art, shouldst thou not weigh the truth of this by trying foils with me, his faithful pupil?"

"Nay, nay," made Master Hackett his reply, holding forth his hand as if to ward off the blow of weapon. "In that same will I in all willingness accept thy Don as having been a true master. Now shall I find out as to the amount and quality of learning which thou hadst at hands of thy first tutor, the Parson of Merton."

Then put he to myself questions in the studies in which had I passed my time in company with Master Hayden. Gave I ready answers, and did he at length pause and gaze at me in wonder. When he next put question to me made he a grievous error. Whereat took I freedom in most respectful way to set him right. At this he uttered one deep sigh, and said in pleasant tone:

"At least was Parson Hayden of much service, in that he hath imparted to thee good groundwork for learning. Would I of verity call the man a scholar."

Did I not deem it well to name to Hackett the truth that had my tutor Hayden much of guidance from his own pupil in the latter years of their studies. And when sat we down next at lessons my new tutor found to his dismay that Walter of Kent was full able to repay him in kind for such knowledge as he himself might impart. Though strove he hard to lead me to mastery of his strange Spanish

and yet stranger French, could I not twist my mind into fit shape to receive the same. Yet came it to pass one day that Hackett was at last brought to see that he were in great error in so far as went his use of foreign tongues, and that in truth had old Don José spoke in proper way not alone his native language, but as well the one in use North of the Pyrenees.

Chanced there to pass that way, upon a journey to the Court of England, the old Count de Noye, a good Huguenot. And did he pause for rest and for refreshment some hours at Bidwell. Sir Francis made toward his guest display of much regard, while Lady Wynnington hovered about him, striving much to please by many bows and smiles, and uttering the few French words which had she at her command, while the Count bore himself toward her in gallant way, after the manner of his race. Spoke he English of most broken kind, and did it seem to cause him much toil to give expression to his thoughts in our tongue. Perceiving this thing Sir Francis said to him that the tutor at Bidwell, and one of his pupils as well, spoke his language. Then were Hackett and myself sent for and came into the presence of the Count de Noye. When had my tutor been told of what were desired of him, bowed he low, yet with look of much assurance, and with broadest smirk, rubbing well his hands meanwhile, he advanced toward the old noble and addressed him in what he deemed most proper French. Yet did the Count seem to find the self-same perplexity which had beset me in striving to comprehend these strange words. At length gave he a shrug of shoulders and told the tutor in French, such as had I been taught by Don José, that he did not understand one word of what had then been said to him.

Now did it dawn upon poor Hackett that, since could he not make out the speech of this noble, was he himself after all no French scholar. Then looked he at myself in sheepish way from out the corners of his eyes. Fell also upon me the glance of the Count de Noye, who said as if unto himself, with another shrug of shoulder:

"If the tutor speak in such strange fashion words of no meaning, what might we look for from the pupil?"

Whereat did I, having made my bow, advance to him and using with great care his language, strove to make clear to him the cause of my tutor's odd words. Was the Count much pleased to hear me speak thus, and placing both his hands upon my shoulders in gentle way did he, with gesture as well as word, praise my accent. Talked we long in French, while Lady Wynnington glanced at me from time to time in way which did bespeak annoyance that the young kinsman of their house should have so great part in the entertaining of the noble guest. Yet seemed her husband pleased at this same thing, while Hackett listened in respectful way, as to an oracle of which the meaning he knew not. When at length I asked of the Count if he had while in Picardy e'er chanced to be entertained at the chateau of the Count de Brecy, he replied that he had made visit there just before the Christmas time. And when I spoke the name of young Constance Leigh his face beamed with pleasure, and he declared she were one most charming little maid. When said he that upon his going back, he looked to find entertainment again with his friend, the Count de Brecy, did I beg of him to take my love unto Mistress Constance. Whereat he tapped me on the breast in playful fashion, and said in his own tongue:

"You rogue, will I grant your prayer, and be your go-between in this same affair of heart."

Thereafter did Master Hackett treat me with much show of deference, which was not pleasing unto Lady Wynnington, since she deemed such as due only to the young master of Bidwell. And spoke she her thoughts to him touching this matter. Then did he show same light respect to me as of old, save when were we alone; and at such times would he make up for what had seemed neglect by bearing himself in well nigh abject way. And soon grew I to be his tutor and he my pupil, when was not Walter of Surrey minded to join us at studies. At such times would both Hackett and myself busy ourselves in striving to instruct him; and I perceived that the seeds of wisdom, which sowed we with lavish hands, did not every one fall on barren ground. And would my comrade have come on well at fencing, were it not that by chance one day the button fell from off my foil, the point of which did inflict one small scratch upon his face, as lunged he forward. Made he no outcry at this, and would the thing have never after been heard of, were it not that just then his mother appeared. And did she then and there put end to his lessons in this art. Likewise by chance Sir Francis once came upon us, as was I instructing our tutor, who sat with most intent face striving to profit by my words. Was the other Walter then at further end of room resting himself from effort of having cast sundry light missiles at the head of Hackett, who had paid no heed to this, since was he so greatly occupied in weighing whatever wisdom were falling from my lips. Said my guardian then naught touching the matter of my having turned tutor; but some days thereafter, when I

came upon him on the stairs, did he tax me with this thing. Could I now do naught but make my full admissions, albeit urging in behalf of Hackett that had he striven most faithfully to do full duty toward both the heir of Bidwell and myself. When had I come to end of this same plea, did Sir Francis smile and say:

"Have I no thought of bringing to task thy elder pupil for his having smaller knowledge than thyself. For right glad am I, Walter of Kent, that thou didst outstrip him, since am I now assured that of the many things thou shalt beat into the head of Hackett, will he on his part be able some day to beat a few into the head of my much spoiled and petted son."

XV.

LONDON.

Had the first summer of my stay at Bidwell drawn well night to close, when there came to pass a thing by the which was I enabled to catch my first wide glimpse of life. Rode there up one day to Bidwell Hall an hour before the noon my old friend, Parson Hayden. And after had he payed his court to Sir Francis, and had bowed in most humble way before the Lady Wynnington, who did acknowledge his obeisance by one stately nod, he gave me greeting of effusive sort. Next he strove to win the favor of Surrey Walter by praises of his fairness of skin and soft beauty of feature; yet did the youth receive his words in yawning fashion, since had he been told this same thing so many times afore by his fond mother, and by others who had sought her favor, that had it now small sweetness for his ear. Yet it chanced that the Lady Wynnington o'erheard this praise of her loved son, and she smiled in gracious way upon him who had spoken thus. And seemed he to take much of pleasure in this his just reward. When had he asked of me touching my studies led I him to our lesson-room, where was he made known to Hackett, whom he treated in pleasant fashion, albeit striving to make it plain unto the man that he himself was far above him. While were we still seated round the board at noonday

meal, did Merton's Parson give to me a shock, and for the moment fill my youthful mind with sore dismay.

"Oh," he exclaimed in tone of one who hath exciting rumor to spread forth, "had I well nigh forgot to tell that which I have heard from one who doth vouch upon his honor for the truth of what he said. There was long time as guest with Sir Harry Bullard at Hillgate, and as well with the dear departed Sir Philip at Merton in the way of tutor, an old limping Papist, concerning whom had many people their grave doubts. The fellow left England some months gone by, though had he not the wisdom to stay beyond seas, but must journey back upon some dark business of conspiracy. Yet was he, and before he might bring to pass his bloody purpose, apprehended by certain watchful officers, and taken to the Tower at London, where will he tarry some few days."

"When leaves this man the Tower," said Sir Francis in tone of questioning, "he will go—?"

"To the scaffold, Sir Francis, the which he doth full well merit. He hath already had trial and conviction."

As said he this Master Hayden looked in searching way into my face, as if to watch for some expression of the pain which he no doubt believed his words had given to me. At same time came there into my mind the true resolve that should not my old friend Don José lay head upon the block, till had I made whate'er strong effort was within my power to save him from this thing. Yet was I not minded to make confident in this matter of Parson Hayden. So I strove hard to maintain calm look, and opened not my lips, nor showed interest, as went he on to say that Sir Harry Bullard, being himself a Papist,

would not dare to make attempt to save his wife's kinsman, and that, even should he be minded to do this, would his plea have no weight. Did I perceive half hidden in his look and words a keen delight at thought that the man who had once taken his place as the tutor at Merton was now like to kneel before the headsman. When from Bidwell Hall he rode away some hours thereafter, was he no doubt of belief that I had from absence grown cold toward this hapless soldier. After lesson time went I forth, and as I rambled on, not minding where I walked, did I strive to hit upon the plan by which might I the best serve my much imperiled friend. When it were come evening sought I Sir Francis, and finding him alone, I declared to him that I were full sure the charges gainst Don José were false, since were he never one to join in act of conspiracy. To this did my guardian shake head, and made he interruption in this way:

"Yet might this same Don José be in the service of they who are in secret striving still to subvert England to Papist rule; and should it have been his orders to come hither upon a certain mission would he be too much of soldier to shirk this thing."

"Yet, sir," I urged, "would he be minded that here in this land, under our gracious Queen of the true faith, hath he in time of need found home and somewhat of happiness. And moreover is his age and crippled state against his being sent on mission of such kind."

Did Sir Francis now say that I might be right touching this matter, yet he declared that he himself had no power or interest which might serve as aid to bring about the pardon of this man. Then begged I of him that at least would he permit me to go to London that I might see the

soldier in his captivity, and learn of him upon what ground might rest the charge of which had he been convicted. Said my guardian now that he perceived naught of advantage which might come of such a visit, save that I would have consolation of saying last farewell to one I had much esteemed and loved. Then with this same plea, which had he just named, did I implore of him to yield me his consent to go to London Tower. Though he warned me that I might even fail to gain entrance to that strong-walled place, yet did he at length grant me the permission which had I sought in such earnest way. Took he from his strong-box a purse that contained five-and-twenty guineas, which he counted, and then gave to me for my use upon this enterprise. Likewise did he say that I should have for the journey the new roan mare, which had he bought the week before, and that was found to be right fleet of foot. As well he wrote out for me, in ill-spelled and straggling words, albeit were these same put together in clear fashion, a letter telling who I was, and where I dwelt, together with the purpose which took me to London. At end of this he wrote that he himself would recompense any one who should grant me such aid as I might chance to stand in need of. Then gave he the name of a certain Knight to whom was he known, and who were like to then be in London, albeit was he sure that this one would do naught to save Don José. When had I declared it was my purpose to ride forth at break of day, Sir Francis grasped me warmly by the hand and, with look which bespoke some affection, he said:

"My Kentish Walter, do I truly wish thee success, and well return from thy journey. Wilt thou see many strange sights, as well as divers sorts and conditions of people.

And will it behove thee to keep thine eyes well open with end to observe and study what thou shalt see; and, since there be rogues about, likewise for thine own well-being and security."

Was I upon the morrow dressed and girt with small sword, and with only pistol as well as purse in hand, ere the sun had risen. Going to the stable had I soon saddle on the new mare's back. With a feeling of much eagerness did I set forth upon my journey. Knew I well the London road for nigh to a dozen miles, and were the scenes along the way that bright morn of peaceful and quiet sort. Made I short pause at one small wayside inn that I might break fast and bait as well the roan. And likewise when were it little past the noon, made I stop at a hostel that had for sign an eagle; yet did I tarry here much longer that might the roan mare have rest. As passed along the latter half of day, found I at times need to ask guidance as to the turn I was to take at next meeting of the ways. The nearer I drew to great London, met I more people on the road, and as well were there more houses to be seen; and did the inns grow larger in their size as well as number. About the porch of some of these, upon settles I saw men with cups in hand, who sipped and idly gazed upon me as I passed. Did more than one maid with full pink cheeks look out at me from opened door of inn and seem to wonder why paused I not there that she might serve me of their ale. As well one slight maid with most fair face looked out at me from her opened casement with much of archness in her glance, as if it pleased her that she had caught my eye. Though had the day been fair there came at early eve a chillness, and did mist begin to rise as if from off the ground.

Then when I came from out betwixt two small hills upon a wide heath, I beheld approaching the same beaten road from a side path two youths, perhaps my elders by some few years. Were both well mounted upon large-boned nags, and wore they well fitting garments. When they perceived me they reined in their beasts and seemed to whisper, meantime well eying me. Did I now recall that Sir Francis had gave me warning that there were rogues about. And had I been told that many of those who took purses on the highway were young, and in truth much like the twain who now watched me. Yet was I not minded to yield up my five-and-twenty guineas unto such as they. And though I believed their nags were no match for the roan which I bestrode, yet had I no wish to cross the health before them, with my back a most plain mark for bullets. In that same moment did I resolve to put bold front upon the matter. Then, moving hand to my only pistol to assure myself 'twas in readiness, rode I toward the youths and reining in the mare, called out in tone and way of courtesy:

"With your leave, young gentlemen, would I make bold to ask if I shall have the pleasure of your company across the heath."

Whereat without utterance of a single word both turned their nags, and using spurs galloped back on the same path by which had they come. Perceived I by this that they were honest youths like unto myself, albeit were they in my eyes far from brave. As rode I across the heath did I laugh softly to myself at thought that they no doubt believed myself to be a scourge of highways, and that they would to others tell of my great stature, fierce look and thundering voice, and withal increasing me to at least a

pair, and mayhap to three or four. Beyond the heath came I upon a small ale-house where paused I for a cup of mild wine to refresh me till I should reach the end of this long day's journey. From him who brought to me the drink did I learn that if I followed straight on the road before me for two miles, turning to neither right nor left, would I come upon the Surrey shore of Thames River, and would I find among the houses there more than one good inn of which to make choice. As rode I on the mist grew thicker, until at length could I see naught a dozen yards beyond the roan mare's nose. And now darkness settled down as well upon the way, so that I for safety deemed it wise to move in slow and cautious fashion. Twice the mare stumbled badly, and when the second time she did this, I sprang from out the saddle to find if she had scraped her knee upon the uneven ground that had been the cause of tripping her. Had she been scratched but in slight way; yet I led her on, hoping for a smoother road, till fell upon my ears the noise of moving waters. Thereby knew I that the River Thames was nigh. Soon could I make out amid the mist before me the twinkle of lights, and some few moments thereafter came I to an inn that had for its sign a falcon. Here did I find fit accommodation for myself and beast.

While was the roan in stable munching her grain, I partook of hearty supper, spread before me in the common room by my red-faced and bustling host. When had my hunger, and thirst as well, gone from me was I shown to the state chamber of the house, where was a large bed beneath high canopy, albeit were the curtains much faded and might have well stood a wash. Since was I full weary from the long day's ride did I soon drop off to sleep,

wherein toward morn dreamed I oft of dear Don José, now free, and anon limping bravely to the block. When I at last awoke I sprang from couch and went to my lattice, from the which could I look out upon the bosom of the river, where I beheld full many barges. Were there as well ships with tall masts, and to these same clung broad sails. As did my gaze follow along the moving stream, perceived I countless buildings, among which rose one great place with stone walls of grim look and massive build. And knew I at first sight that this same were London's far-famed Tower.

Was the morning clear and bright, and from the place held by the sun in Eastern sky, knew I it were time to break my fast. When had I partook of sufficient food of substantial kind, and of drink as well, I walked to the side of the now fast running Thames, and saw near by a landing-place. There found I an old waterman, with face much browned and with long grizzled beard, seated in his boat. Did he with much readiness bargain to take me to the Tower-landing. Stepped I quickly into his craft, which he rowed with ease toward the vast fortress. Though were this same old waterman most busy with his oars, yet had he much vigor left for use in constant wag of his glib tongue. Told he in many words how had he five years gone by stood on England's cliffs and from this vantage ground had hurled his loud defiance at the great Armada, when was the wrath of Heaven, in form of swift destroying winds, sweeping o'er her many ships. Was my waterman, as drew he nigh the Tower landing, slow to swing in his boat, since had he no doubt the wish to finish one small tale that had he just begun. When had be brought this same to end, and had received the pittance for his service,

he placed it in my power to leap ashore. As drew I nigh to the Tower drawbridge, which made passage o'er the deep, wide moat, I perceived that there stood people without the gate, as if desiring admittance, the which might they not have for the asking. And wore some of these, who did thus loiter, most anxious faces. And yet were there others who came up and then disappeared within the walls, having found easy entrance. When had I reached the gate there stood a guard without a wicket through which must I needs pass ere could I get within the Tower. Was this same guard to my eye of great stature, and was his face most ruddy, albeit were there about the same a stern look. When stood I before him, as if to ask for entrance, did he scowl and demand of me what business had brought me hither. I replied in tone of much respect that I had wish to speak with my old tutor, Don José de Madura, whom had I been told was held within under sentence of death.

"So, so, my stripling," he said, eyeing me sharply, "this friend of thine is to die. And dost thou know for what foul crime the just vengeance of the Law is to be meted out to him?"

"Nay, sir," I made reply, "I know not of what charge hath he been convicted. And in truth am I of firm belief that he hath done naught to merit death."

"How, now!" exclaimed the guard with angry glare. "Hast thou the hardihood to rail at our just Laws and Judges, and to declare they would take away for the mere pleasure the lives of innocent men."

Then said he in firm tones that I should not pass the wicket till had I brought some one to be surety that I might be safely sent to the convicted man. As turned I

away and passed back o'er the drawbridge, was I minded to find Sir Lawrence Warren, the Knight whom had Sir Francis named as being known to him, and to ask his interest to gain for me an entrance to Don José's cell. And while seeking direction to his lodgings I found myself upon a street of so strange a look as to fill me then with wonder. Seemed it on all sides girt about with houses; and in the lower part of many of these same were shops, in which were exposed for sale things of all sorts and descriptions. Were there great throngs of people on foot, some moving briskly, and others in loitering way, pausing at shop doors and windows. In middle of the way did there stream along many upon their horses, and a few coaches, and strong carts as well. And were at first my ears confused by the loud noises of the bustling street. Though would I have in truth been pleased to slowly move amid these scenes and closely watch the faces of the passers, and look in at doors of many of the shops, yet was I minded that 'twas my present business to find at once some one who might aid me to pass the bluff guard at the Tower's wicket. As glanced I in the open door of a shop where were exposed canes and swords and many other things of different kinds, perceived I a man of a most pleasant countenance. Did he seem to be the keeper of the shop, and since there were none within the place seeking bargains deemed I him a fit person to question as to where dwelt the one I sought. No sooner had I passed the door than came this man straight to me with many bows and smiles, and asked what would I be pleased to require at his hands.

"Good friend," made I reply, "thou wilt do a most kindly turn to me, a stranger, by directing me to where I may find Sir Lawrence Warren."

"Let me see," did he say scratching head in thoughtful manner for full a moment, "do I not recall where Sir Lawrence dwells, yet—" here he seized me by the arm and led me to where hung a small sword in neat sheath, "hast thou never seen so good a bargain as this same. Will I sell it to thee for five guineas. Nay, if thou art not minded to give five, shalt thou take the sword for four guineas and twelve shillings. Do I perceive that thine own sword is sadly out of fashion, and I wonder not thou dost seek to replace it with this same blade which thou wilt now make purchase of." When had I assured him that I had no thought of buying then another sword did he, yet clinging to my arm, lead me to where stood within a rack many canes of varied size and pattern; and went he on thus:

"Yet shalt thou at least have cane to carry in thy hand; and here are many from among which shalt thou choose the one that is the most pleasing to thine eye. This one will I part with for two guineas, this for three, and this for one guinea and sixteen shillings."

When had I made bold to say I was not minded that morn to buy a cane, did he grasp my arm yet more tightly, if he would have me to believe there was for me no escape from out his shop till had I made purchase of some sort. And would I no doubt have yielded, since had I no further time to waste in this fashion, were it not that there now entered the shop a gentleman in rich attire, from whose fingers and from the hilt of whose fine sword came the sparkle of jewels, and who seemed minded to buy things of some value. Perceiving him my captor gave me release, and made toward his man with bows and much rubbing of hands. When had I reached the street did I wonder

if were all shop-keepers in London of same sort as this one. Not many yards from thence saw I through the open door of yet another shop its keeper waiting no doubt for bargains. And went I in to him and asked if he could direct me to where I might hope to find Sir Lawrence Warren. Shook he his head, and made reply in pleasant tone that it were not in his power to aid me thus, else would he gladly do the same. Yet did he not ask of me to purchase aught of all his wares, though he had upon his shelves many gay cloaks and fine apparel of yet other kinds. When had I thanked him for his good intent, I thought to now ask my question of they whom I should pass upon the street. The first one whom I approached with end to gaining that knowledge of which I stood in need, was a tall young gentleman, with a smooth and placid face, and dressed with much of care. When I began my question, paused he and bent ear toward me, and listened in careful way till had I uttered my last word. Then did he look at me with lip curled in scornful manner, and made he this reply:

"In faith have I no knowledge where this person may be found, nor have I aught of desire to know where he dwells."

Whereat passed this gentleman along in stately way. The next person to whom I put this same question had a merry face, albeit were his whole apparel much soiled and worn. Did he pause and listen to me with look as if of much respect; and then slowly opened he his mouth, sending forth the fume of strong spirits, and while twinkled both his eyes, he said:

"In truth, my friend, I know not now where Larry dwells, since is he so oft minded to have change of lodg-

ings. And yet last time we met did he say that he would send unto me some bright morning such as this, and by the hand of one young comely friend of his two silver shillings, with the which were I to drink the health of the sender and of the bearer."

Did I deem that this same fellow were worthy of the shillings for which he asked, since had he cloaked his beggar act in so clever way. Drew I forth my purse and gave to him the silver coins. As fell the two within his hand he bowed low, and in fawning way spoke thus:

"Beside the health of thy friend and mine, Sir—Sir Warren Lawrence, am I charged to drink to that of the bearer of this same gift of silver. And did Sir Warren—mean I Sir Lawrence fail to make mention of thy name."

"Nay, nay," said I as turned I from him, "let all the honor of this thing be with Sir Lawrence."

One after the other did I approach three gentlemen and ask of them my question; and each in way of some courtesy made reply that had he not the knowledge which I sought. Next came up to me and placed hand upon my shoulder a man of most rough appearance and asked if I were then looking for Sir Lawrence Warren. When had I declared that I was indeed in search of that same Knight, he said that if I would pledge the payment of two shillings he would in few moments lead me unto him. Gave I the fellow full assurance that should he have the small sum which he named, if he would guide me to Sir Lawrence. Whereat he led the way, and did I follow close upon his heels. Had we gone thus for no great distance when turned he aside from the busy street, and entered into a narrow way where were naught but old dwellings in seeming need of much repair. When had he gone along this

some hundred yards, he turned into an alley foul and dark. Did I now perceive the fellow was a rogue, who was minded to lead me to some den, where hoped he with aid of comrades of his kind to rob and if need be kill me. Paused I without the uninviting place, and called to him who would have had me as his prey:

"Here are the two shillings which have I agreed to pay thee!"

Did I then fling to him the coins. Whereat he picked up the same in vexed way; and then with what he did no doubt intend for pleasant smile, but which to my eye was very far from such, he urged:

"Why art thou afeared, good master? Is this place but a short way to the quiet street where lodges good Sir Lawrence Warren."

"So, fellow," made I reply, "shalt thou go unto Sir Lawrence, and say that I would have speech with him at corner of yon wide and bustling street."

Then turned I on heel and walked back along the path which had I followed in the steps of this false guide. Once did I look o'er shoulder, and beheld I the rogue coming out from his dark alley. Then did he slink away, and quick turn a nigh corner. When had I regained the busy street, asked I in vain of one old gentleman where might I find my guardian's friend. Scarce had I then made one full score of steps when I heard, close behind my ear, a woman's voice. Did I pausing turn head quickly, and behold one whom I at first thought might be some grand Court lady, since was she decked out in apparel of such seeming richness as well as gayety. Yet when had I looked the more closely did I perceive that were her cheeks painted far too much beneath her eyes, the which

were large and shining. And was there in her look somewhat of coarseness. As to her garments did my nearer glance light on some soiled and faded spots. Yet her voice sounded soft and gentle, as in smooth way she said:

"My good young gentleman, since thou art minded to see Sir Lawrence Warren, will I take much of pleasure in showing thee unto the house wherein he dwells."

Since had I now my reason to look with doubt upon guidance proffered in such free way, was I not minded to accept of this one's offer. And while within my mind I put in form the excuse I deemed best to offer unto her, my glance strayed cross the street, and there fell upon a stout gentleman, about whom was that which seemed familiar. Looked I more sharply, and then did I perceive this one to be none other than the Baron de Wycherly. Turning to her who would have been my guide, I bowed in courteous way, and said:

"Thanking thee, madam, for this kindly offer, would I say that have I no heart to put thee to such pother in the matter. Moreover do I behold across the way one who hath it in his power to serve me full as well as might our friend, good Sir Lawrence."

Whereat I left this woman, looking at me in disappointed way, albeit did she seem to have been in measure soothed by my show of courtesy. Having held my path through the moving stream that nigh filled the street I ran to o'ertake him who had once been my sire's neighbor.

XVI.

THE TOWER.

When had I come up with the haughty lord of Gorley Castle and did accost him, paused he and for a moment gazed on me in wonder. Then as I named myself to him, and he perceived that I was in truth the son of departed Sir Philip Wynnington, he said:

"Why, my boy, how thou hast grown! Art thou more tall and broad than my own Henry, who was thy friend when dwelt we for a time at Hazel Lodge. Wilt thou soon be going to Court and claiming at the hands of great Elizabeth thy knighthood, so that thou shalt be as all thy sires have been. And will this thing be fit and right of thee. So, so, thou dwell'st with Sir Francis of thy name. And now am I minded that my Maud saw thee when did she go on visit to her young friend, the daughter of bluff Sir Peter Poole. Ah, are they not a twain of sweet young maids?" When had I vowed that of a truth were Maud and Amy both fair to look upon, went he on: "Knew I, Walter, that thou hadst good eye for such, as have I myself, and as hadst thy true sire who, as deserved he right well, was much beloved. And now I would ask what is the business which has brought thee to noisy London?"

Then as I told the Baron how had I come in hope of saving my old friend, the soldier of Fortune, or at least of seeing him to say farewell, did his brow knit and his

head shake back and forth, as if thus to bespeak the truth that had he small liking for my plan. When had I come to end of naming what I had in mind, he said:

"So, Walter, thou would'st keep from the headsman this Popish man of Spain who hath brought into the Kingdom a written message urging to treason? Was there some suspicion of young Squire Canby of Whiteoak, a Papist who hath often in secret spoke seditious words. And when would this same man have been seized by officers of our most gracious Sovereign for having strove to incite certain ones to rebellious acts, did he fly. And then doth land in England, fresh from Spain, your Don José, who as well was resting under some suspicion. When was he seized did the officers entrusted with the task find upon him a letter to this Canby signed with a long name which is like to that of one of Popish Philip's most trusted counsellors. At first reading did this same seem of harmless fashion; yet when came the officers to well weigh the words, 'twas found that by twisting these in certain way a meaning of most evil kind showed itself. In truth was this letter writ and designed with end of urging this same Canby to sow seeds of discord, and to do aught which might lie within his power to bring about uprisings of the followers of Rome. And dost thou not perceive, Walter, how much of danger there doth lie in failing to punish with strong arm such acts as this?"

Urged I in behalf of Don José that might he have had no knowledge that there was evil in this letter; but did the Baron, again with many shakes of head, declare that much wiser ones than myself had gone well into this same matter, and were firm in their belief of the old man's guilt. And hence would it be most unreasoning in me

to set up my doubts gainst their true knowledge. When had he paused for full a moment did he assume more kindly tone, and say:

"Yet, Walter, is it in truth not strange that thou shouldst wish to see thy old tutor ere they shall behead him; and may I be of some service in gaining for thee entrance to the Tower."

While offered I unto the Baron what seemed to me a fit expression of my gratitude for this proffered aid, were we already bending steps toward the grim stronghold. When had we at length reached the drawbridge, did my Lord de Wycherly bid me remain without while went he in to seek the Governor of the place. Perceived I that the same guard who had refused to grant me entrance now stood aside in way of much respect when passed there through the wicket my new patron. Had I not tarried long among they, who like to myself had not found favor in the eyes of the bluff keeper of the wicket, when came there out a messenger to say that had the Governor given consent that Master Wynnington should be taken unto his friend who lay under sentence within. And as passed I through the wicket did the great guard give shrug of shoulders, as if there were now within his mind the thought that whate'er of mischief I should work within the place, might there no blame be laid for such thing at his door. The messenger led the way through what then seemed many passages, and up many flights of echoing steps. Went I long years thereafter through the Tower, yet seemed it not at such time so vast and strange as did it look in my youthful eyes, when passed I to see Don José in his cell. While went I thus along I noted that was the messenger a youth like myself in size and years,

yet of a grave countenance and minded not to utter one word more than for which might he have pressing need. Beheld I many warders, of whom the most were at their duties. And in the faces of these same did I perceive expectant air, as if each one were looking forward to the time when he should rest with pot of ale and food he liked before him. Had such warders as loitered in the passages a listless look; and were these no doubt thinking that they were soon to go about their tasks. Yet was there upon the faces of they who acted, or they who rested, naught that would seem to show that they in least way heeded the grim truth that there were now within those walls men who were, mayhap for no wrong deed, condemned to die. At length did my guide pause nigh to a certain cell-door, without the grating of which stood a warder listening with attentive ear to one who spoke within. Then heard I the familiar voice of Don José. Was he giving description of one of those amusing scenes which had it been his wont throughout his long career to note and store away in his true memory. As did he bring this tale to end, the warder burst into loud laughter, from which he shook for some moments. Then wiping tears from out the corners of his eyes, he said to the condemned one:

"Might I in truth listen to thee, friend, for every hour that am I on watch. And will I be loath to part with thee, which thing I much fear shall come to pass upon the morrow."

Now did my guide say to the warder that had I permission from the Governor to have speech with this same prisoner. Whereat was the cell door quick unlocked, and stood I face to face with my old friend. Gazed he at me in wonder till had he assured himself that I were none

other than the Walter whom had he taught many things. Then did he clasp me within his arms, and say it gave unto him deep pleasure to behold me again. When asked I of him concerning the letter to Squire Canby, whereby had he been brought unto this sore strait, he looked into my face in most frank and open way, and made this reply:

"My Walter, as truly as I now live, and as truly as shall I upon the morrow die, did I bring that same letter into England in all good faith, and dreaming not that there were aught of harm within its lines. Came I cross seas to this land with view to receiving that same Missal, the which thy dear sire bequeathed to me. The letter writ to Squire Canby was placed within my hands by one who was to me a stranger, and who did seem a most plain and honest gentleman. Nor would I deem him to be one who had e'er cut figure at the Court. Though have I heard this letter read, do I not perceive how any man can find in its plain words the twisted and distorted meaning which have my accusers given unto the same. Were it but an offer of exchange. The writer, whose name was not one I had e'er heard afore, did make proposal to send unto Canby sheep of a certain breed of Spain, if in return the Squire would send to him the same number of an English breed which was he minded to have. And my accusers avow that beneath these simple lines comes an offer to send Spanish gold to buy Englishmen for seditious work in the cause of Rome."

"My friend," did I now exclaim, "doth it seem most strange and wicked that thou shouldst be called upon to give thy life for such a reason! And before thou shalt undergo this unjust sentence shall I, thy pupil once, stand before the great Elizabeth and plead thy cause!"

The old man smiled upon me in most pleasant way at this proof of the love which I yet had for him. And then with grave look and shake of head, said he this:

"Nay, Walter, would I in truth not have thee take upon thyself so much of pother in this thing. My peril is not of so grave a sort as might it have been."

"Why, sir," I asked, "didst thou not thyself make mention of the truth that thou hast been condemned to death."

"Yea," made he reply, "will I meet death; but 'twill be a small matter of beheading me. One quick blow, and so much as doth appertain to this world is o'er. Now were it a matter of tying my four limbs unto wild horses of that same number, or of roasting me alive at slow fire, or of walling me in some foul dungeon to slowly die of thirst and hunger, might I have sense of some uneasiness, and mayhap before the morn some unhappy dreams. But as 'tis, have I cause for much of cheerfulness. For, truth to tell, my Walter, have I grown somewhat weary of limping on this chill path of life. Are there within my breast the memories of some disappointments, the which would I fain forget forever."

Did I not urge my friend to recall these words, and give approval of my plan to seek the presence of the Queen, with hope of making plain to her his innocence; yet in my heart had I already made resolve that I should venture upon this same enterprise. Spoke I to him of other matters, and was there a thing now said which brought to him reminder of a certain bloodthirsty yet most comic knave, who had served in a company of his which fought is one of the religious wars of France. And told he in so amusing way of the acts and words of that same de-

stroyer of life and creator of mirth, that for the time did it slip my mind how was he in truth condemned to die, and that had I come to take of him a farewell, which might prove our last. When did I deem it high time to be off for Greenwich Palace, where had I been told the Queen then held her Court, I asked of him if he had been given food that were to his taste. Made he reply that had all that was required to sustain life been brought unto him, but that since was there no money in his purse came there naught in way of luxury into his cell. Yet he declared that he minded not this thing, since had he so long been used to soldier fare.

"Then, Don José," said I, "thou shalt have one good supper in the Tower, and shalt thou have this same at my expense."

"Do I give thee hearty thanks for this, my Walter." Was there slight glisten, like to that of one stray tear in each eye, as spoke the old man this. "And will I relish all, e'en to the smallest morsel which I eat, and for thy dear sake, oh, best of friends."

Then did I take leave of him. Smiled he in pleasant way as he embraced me, and was there now no trace of moisture in his eyes. Nor were there tears in mine; for was now hope busy within my young breast. Wished he myself, as when last time we parted, all of success and happiness. When had the door been locked again, drew I the warder to one side and in whisper asked of him what would be the cost of a good supper of fat pullet and soft bread with some other things that would go well with these. And did I say a flask of red Spanish wine was a matter which 'twould be most ill to overlook. As I made mention of these things wore the man a look as if he were

weighing well the price of each. At length did he open lips, and name to me a certain sum; yet chanced I to perceive just then a twinkle within his eyes, such as may be seen in those of clever ones when make they bargains by the which feel they assured of profit. Then came there into my mind the thought that this warder might himself have pressing need of the very sum which had he just fixed upon. And might this same lack of money stand betwixt Don José and that which would I fain have him to eat and drink. Took I out my purse and said:

"Now, my friend, will I pay you for two suppers of the kind that have we come to agreement on. And shall you yourself have one, while is the other to be taken in to our brave old friend, Don José."

Whereat gave I to him twice the sum which had he asked for the one supper. As put he the money in his pocket he looked at me in somewhat sheepish way, and thus did seem to me to make admission that I were right to so suspect him of having in mind a scurvy act. Then grasped he my hand and declared that should the convicted man have the full supper, from which would there not be defrauded one crumb nor one drop. Went I now back along the path which had I taken while had I guidance unto Don José's cell. Strayed I more than once from off the way, to the which was I each time shown again by some warder. At last went I out into the open air by the same wicket I had come in at. There I beheld the bluff guard who had at first denied me entrance. Did he now glance at me sharply, as if he feared that I had brought out from the Tower some thing of value which had I not rightly come by. Then of a sudden changed his mood,

and in a tone of banter called he out after me, as walked I from him:

"How now, my young gentleman, dost thou have success in the enterprise of setting free the ancient one?"

"Of that, friend," made I reply, as I paused and turned me half around, "will we both know in way of certainty upon the morrow."

XVII.

ELIZABETH, THE QUEEN.

When had I reached the landing did I ask of one who loitered there if I might, by taking passing barge upon the river, come nigh to Greenwich Palace. Made he reply by pointing to a trim craft out upon the river. Was this manned by stout oarsmen, and within were certain others, whom I found thereafter were as well as I minded to go unto the Court of England's Queen. Did the helmsman now cause the barge to swing in toward the landing. Strove I to give expression of my thanks unto the one who had pointed out this same barge to me, but was he then so intent at watching they which sat within the same, that gave he no heed to what I said. When had come the barge in close to shore called out the helmsman that they who had wish to go to Greenwich Palace should stand ready to get quickly aboard. As were there none other than myself then at the landing who were so minded, did the boat make but short pause. I leaped on board in nimble way, and scarce had I found seat when I perceived that the barge was already moving out toward the middle of the stream. Looked the helmsman at me in sharp manner when he took of me my toll. Did I note that they in company with whom I were journeying to Greenwich Palace, were dressed in rich garments, and held high their heads. When spoke one of them to another

was it in soft tone, and with graceful inclination of the head, and as well of gesture. Though I now perceived all this, yet were my thoughts intent the while on how I should best plead the cause of Don José, when stood I before the proud Elizabeth. Did I on this same matter ponder deep, and weigh well what I should say. Though came we nigh to other landings, yet were there at none of these same persons who waited to come aboard. At last did the boat reach the Greenwich landing; and then my companions rose to foot and stepped in stately way upon the shore. Felt I assured that I had but to follow at the heels of these same gentlemen.

When I had come to the entrance of Greenwich Palace, I found there two tall and grim guards with shining breast-plates and burnished arms. Yet were they mute and motionless, and seemed not to heed my throng of rich-clad guides, nor yet my humble self, as passed we slowly and with uncovered heads into the wide and lofty halls. Had I made not many steps upon the polished floor when came there to me an officer in gay attire, and with hand at hilt of his fine sword. In gentle voice, yet meanwhile looking at me in searching way, he asked what business might have brought me there. Then in few words did I tell him that my friend had been condemned in unjust manner, and that had I wish to plead for him before her gracious Majesty. Shook he his head, as if to give exprsession of his doubt of my bringing to success this enterprise. Then he said:

"Shalt thou, Master Wynnington, in turn have chance to speak with our Sovereign. Yet shalt thou first exercise much of patience. So follow me."

Then he led the way unto a certain room, in which

perceived I many chairs and as well two tables. When had he motioned to me to take here a seat, did the officer depart. When glanced I around I beheld in a corner three gentlemen, with heads together in what seemed to be the settlement of some point of much weight. And whate'er this might have been, spoke they one and all in low whisper. Presently there came in the room another officer, attired in same fashion as was he who had guided me thither, and made he motion to the three. Then did they in eager way rise to their feet and follow this one from the room, since had they no doubt been summoned into the presence of the Queen. Scarce had they left when in came two gentlemen, who sat down nigh to each other, yet seemed not minded to converse. Was one of the twain a stout, red-faced man, who with head sunk forward and eyes fixed upon the floor, looked to be deep lost in thought. The other, who was of spare make, did move about upon his chair in most restless fashion, and kept eyes upon the doorway. From time to time came there in other gentlemen who took seat and waited, some with air of patience, and some in restless way. And did they all receive their summons from some officer and go out, leaving me at length alone. Grew I uneasy as the hours wore by, from the fear that good Queen Bess, in giving audience unto many, might become so weary that would she not be minded to listen with a patient ear when should come my turn to have speech with her. At least there entered this room the same officer who had long since shown me thither. Did he look at me in way of much surprise, the which am I of firm belief was feigned, and said in tone that now had in it some of harshness:

"What, thou art yet here! Has no one come to summon

thee to enter the Queen's presence?" When had I told him that my long and patint waiting were yet vain, did he shake head in vexed manner and say: "Then wouldst thou do well to go now hence, and come again upon the morrow."

"Yet, sir," I urged, "the friend, for whose life come I here to beg, is like to go unto the block at early morn."

"Is thy plea, Master Wynnington, one that brings to me much of vexation," went he on in frowning way, albeit did he not look me in the face. "I will now show what is the most I may do in this matter. Follow me."

Led this officer the way from the room, and through broad hallways to an apartment like to the one where I had waited. Made he motion to me to take seat, and then did he point through a door which opened into a wide state-chamber. Hung there upon the walls of this large paintings, and on a table of costly make were many parchments. Were the hangings all of rich texture; and could I perceive from where I sat naught that failed to speak of great luxury. Had I scarce time to note all this, when the officer in low tone, yet in way designed to impress well upon me his words, said this:

"When comes back the Queen from her walk amid the gardens, will she enter yonder chamber. Then will she instruct one of her Secretaries touching certain letters that he shall write for her; and may she likewise give audience to some great nobles from yond seas. Watch well thy time, and when she doth seem to be at leisure for the moment, go thou in unto her in fit way of humbleness, and say to her what thou hast in mind, and in as few words as thou canst put the same. Yet if thou shouldst presume to draw nigh to her when is she on aught else

intent, and should thereby arouse her anger, say not that an officer brought thee hither and gave thee this counsel. In truth look I to thee, Master Wynnington, to take upon thine own shoulders all the danger of this thing."

"Sir," did I then reply, "will I in most cheerful fashion bear myself all of evil which may result from any blunder of word or act that I chance to make in this same matter."

Then offered I to him my thanks for that he had shown to me so much of kindness, though to this made he a small acknowledgement in way of one slight nod. When had he gone, I sat with ear strained toward the open door of the state chamber and listened for the coming of the Queen. Had many moments fled when fell there on my ears the sound of a woman's voice; and as came this nearer did I note that the tone was of commanding sort. Next there came into view and stood nigh to the table a lady whose face was turned so that I might behold full one half of this. And had I not cause to gaze at the same for more than one instant to know of a surety that this was Elizabeth of England. Were there faint lines upon the cheek I saw, which I afterward set down to care. Was the robe she wore of costly cloth, yet could I not name the color, nor yet the fashion of the make, since had I then, as ever since, small eye for such things. Did I note the reddish tinge upon her hair, though would I be loath to vow she wore not then a wig. Though had she come to age of sixty years, she yet stood erect. But that about her which did the most impress itself on me, youth though I were, was her mien, the which deemed I majestic. As she spoke again I perceived that there had come unto her now one of her Secretaries, a gentleman of some forty years, whose long face wore a look of deep respect, albeit was there

mingled with this same an anxious shade. Sat he at the table, and picked out from the many parchments a certain one, which he smoothed out with seeming care, and then taking up pen did he look up to the Queen, as if asking what words she was minded to have him set down. Then she asked:

"What was the thing we were intent upon when came last time to interrupt that messenger?"

"Was I then, may it please your Majesty," he replied in tone of much reverence, "writing down what you had wish to say to the Bishop of—"

"Now do we recall the matter," made she interruption. "Hadst thou begun to write to this same Lord spiritual, who hath too high regard for his own rights, and too small for those of his Sovereign. Were set down by thee some things which we do of a verity expect and demand that he shall do." Made to her the Secretary acknowledgment that had he before writ down as she had said. Then in firmer voice, and with gesture that bespoke some slight glow of wrath, spoke she this: "Now shalt thou go on to write to this same too haughty Bishop—'unless thou shalt do as hast thou herein been given direction, by God, sir, I will unfrock thee!' "

Whereat the Secretary glanced up at the face of Elizabeth, as if to assure himself that had she in truth the wish that he should write down the self same words which had she just spoken. Then did she toss high her head, and bringing down her fingers with strong taps upon the table's edge, said she in stern voice:

"Have I told thee what to write, and yet thou hast hardihood to stare idly at me. Set down at once each and every word which have I uttered."

Did now the man quick drop his eyes, and with look of meekness bent he o'er the parchment and wrote. When had he finished with this same letter to the Bishop, the name of whom came not unto my ear, he read unto her a petition from certain of her subjects in Cornwall, who deemed themselves to have been wronged by act of officers of her own naming. Then spoke she in vexed tone of the worry which were her chosen officers ever causing for her, albeit were she wont to make selection of these with great care. And likewise did she give expression to her wonder that so many of her subjects had such small regard for her peace of mind as to annoy her with petitions, instead of bearing such trifles for her sake in cheerfulness. In speaking thus the Queen let fall some two or three round oaths that would in truth have done credit to the tongue of a right doughty King. When had she bid the Secretary to write unto those same officers of hers in Cornwall, commanding them to make full amends for the unjust acts which had the petition named, did I perceive that there had come o'er her face a change, and that wore she now a most gracious look.

Was the cause of this no less than the coming of two courtly gentlemen of foreign look, and clad in rich attire. Sparkled jewels from their hands, and as well from the hilts of their polished swords. As went they bowing up to her, did first the elder and then in turn the younger, bend o'er the hand of great Elizabeth and kiss the same in most gallant fashion. And uttered both, albeit in most broken English, many compliments, the which she received with expression of much pleasure upon her countenance. Spoke the younger with strong accent of France, yet did he so distort my mother tongue that would I have

wished to have gone in unto him and begged of him to use his own language, while of his words would I render true translation to her Majesty. I deemed the elder gentleman to be some small German prince. Did he, full as much as his companion, twist and deform his English speech. Yet seemed not the Queen in least to mind the rude handling which was her own language thus receiving from the twain. Made they much flourish in way of gesture, and swayed about while oft bowing, though was there grace in all their actions. Nor was she minded to either stand or hold her head in steady fashion. More than once did she assure air of coquette, full many years more youthful than three score. Would she as well simper, and make grimace that mayhap would have done well enough for some giddy maid. Did I marvel at thought that it was she who had such little time before borne herself in right majestic way. When at length were this audience at end, and had withdrawn the twain, stood Elizabeth lost in pleasant thought, and swaying and tossing head as if in response to fancied compliments. Then of a sudden she chanced to look into the outer room, where had I sat and intently watched her. As she perceived me, came there upon her brow a frown. Did I now deem it wise to make my throw of chance. Rising to foot I stepped forward in brisk way, and as I drew nigh to her I bowed low. Then dropped I upon one knee and gazed up into the royal countenance with look in which was I minded to show admiration as well as reverence. Did now her frown give place to slight blush of pleasure, which had come no doubt from my admiring glance. Then said she in tone of some graciousness:

"Rise, stripling, and tell me who thou art."

"May it please your Majesty, I am Walter Wynnington," I made reply when had I arisen. "Am I son and heir of Sir Philip Wynnington, of Merton in Kent, whom God took hence now more than seven months gone by."

"Do I recall thy sire," said the Queen with slight nod. "Now tell me what thou hast come to ask of me."

"May it please your gracious Majesty, have I come to implore thee to weigh for thyself fully the charges brought gainst Don José de Madura, who hath been condemned to die upon the morrow. Was he my sire's friend, and my own tutor; and am I of firm belief that is he fully innocent of wrong doing."

Came there back the frown upon the great Queen's brow; and at same time did I note a smile of slight disdain upon the bent face of Master Secretary, as if he much wondered that I had assurance to thus plead for this man's life. Looking at me sharply, Elizabeth said:

"Dost thou know what thou art saying, Master Wynnington? Hath not my Court of Law, by the which was the trial of this Don José had, declared that he did bring into our realm from yond seas a letter urging a rebellious-minded subject to acts of treason gainst us? Wouldst thou, striping as thou art, set thyself up in way of judgment above our learned men of Law?"

"May it please your gracious Majesty," I did plead, yet striving to mingle admiration with my look of suppliant respect, "the letter which brought he unto thy Kingdom, in all good faith as doth he declare, urged no one to treason, but proposed, as a mere transaction of exchange, to give certain Spanish sheep for English sheep. But have thy loyal officers of law, no doubt from excess of zeal for their beloved Sovereign distorted the simple words and

twisted the same till might they seem to express wicked and dangerous designs. May I tell to your gracious Majesty what I know of Don José?"

Then did nod the Queen, upon whose face had the frown gave way to thoughtful look, and moving to a rich-carved chair she sat for the first time since I had beheld her. Then told I my royal listener how had my friend and tutor upon the frightful Eve of St. Bartholomew saved the de Brecys from the assassins. Next did I tell how cherished he regard for the land where had he found shelter, when of that same had he stood in great need. Next I pictured him as one who had ever fought his upright foe in open way, scorning to stoop to secret acts of trickery. As told I of the poor man's wounded heart when had he perceived that he might not hope to gain the love of the certain fair one whose life had he saved, did the Queen make much show of interest. Then came I to end of what I had to say by an appeal in earnest words that might not my sire's trusted friend be sent to the block when were there no clear proofs of guilt. Rose now the Queen, and going to a small table took from the same a polished sword, with which she paced as with a cane back and forth for nigh two score steps. Then in sudden way turned she to myself, and said:

"Is it exceeding fortunate for Don José that he was the friend of Sir Philip Wynnington, of whom do I well remember both face and bearing when rode I among my loyal Britains who had come together that they might meet the hordes of Spain. And then did I mark thy knightly sire as one who, if they of the Armada might swarm ashore, would be in foremost rank to hurl them back into the sea!" Paced she again some steps with

sword as cane, and then went on thus: "Shall Don José not go to block upon the morrow, as have many whose guilt was not truly proven. Now, since hath there been much of foreign urging of our disloyal subjects to bring about dissensions, deem we it wise to have thy friend conveyed beyond seas. Yet hath he much cause to be grateful to thee, his old pupil, since hast thou in truth saved his life."

Was I quickly weighing what words I might best use to give expression of my gratitude and joy, when did the Queen lift her sword and say:

"And now, good Walter, shall we find pleasure in bestowing upon thee honor of knighthood."

"Knighthood, your Majesty!" said I in wonder, for had I not dreamed of such a thing. "Am I in truth of fitting age for honors like to these?"

"Care I not what thy age may be, for since thou hast come thus to succor the weak and the distressed, hast thou shown qualities of knightly sort. Therefore dost thou deserve the title which thy sire bore so well. Kneel!"

Then I sank on knees with bowed head before Elizabeth, who did tap me lightly on the shoulder with the sword, and said:

"Arise, Sir Walter Wynnington."

Now I slowly rose to foot, and perceiving that were her left hand extended out beyond her girdle some little way, did I take the same and press it with my lips, meanwhile bowing low and looking upward at my Sovereign again with look of reverence mingled with admiration. And once more came there the slight blush of seeming pleasure upon her face, as gave me she a quick nod and likewise a gracious smile. Then made she a gesture as if dismissing

me, and turned unto her Secretary, upon whose face did I note a look as if he were ill-pleased that a stranger lad should meet with such favor at the royal hands. Would it have been vain for me to have striven to make further expression of my gratitude, since was the Queen, still with sword in hand, intent upon a piece of parchment which lay before her on the table.

Now withdrew I into the ante-chamber, and from thence gained a hallway which had I remembrance of having passed through before. Next strayed I from the right path and into a room where sat some officers in converse. Glanced up one in angry way, and did he tell me that I should have turned to left instead of right. Gave I this man thanks, not for his courtesy, but for his having in his snappish fashion given me somewhat of guidance. When walked I by the room, where had I first passed time in waiting, I perceived therein a gentleman with anxious face, who was no doubt tarrying for audience with the Queen.

"Friend," thought I, "God grant that thou shalt leave this place with as light a heart as have I within me now."

When had I reached the Palace entrance, I heard quick footsteps behind me, and turning I perceived the self same officer who had guided me unto the Queen's ante-chamber. Did he now smile in most pleasant way and grasping my hand, he said:

"Right glad am I, Sir Walter Wynnington, to know that in following as thou didst my counsel, thou hast received at the hands of our gracious Sovereign the boon which thou didst beg of her. In truth hast thou right to now take in thyself great pride."

Did I thank this gentleman for the kindness of his

words; yet perceived I then that he looked to me for more than this. And was I minded that he had been of much service to me in getting to the ear of good Elizabeth. So I asked of him if he were like to take offence, if one indebted to his good offices should wish to make him present of some few golden coins. Did he shake head in smiling way, and make reply:

"Nay, Sir Walter, am I not moved with such ease to wrath."

Whereat I took from out my purse five guineas, with intent to give these and no more to the officer. Yet did the coins, when lay they upon my palm, seem too few to offer such a gentleman for such a service as had he rendered me. So drew I out five more pieces, and placed the ten in the hand of this same officer. And, when had he given thanks for these, was he minded to say that he knew of certain worthy people, who through ill-fortune had fallen into sore distress, the which had been at times relieved by the bounty of suppliants at Court. And would it please him to become my almoner in this matter. Gave I to him three guineas for his distressed ones, albeit did I suspect that the beings for whom he begged were none but his own self. And now at parting he said:

"Do I pray God that thou, Sir Walter Wynnington, shalt live in health and happiness till thou art long past the age of thine ancient friend whose life thou hast this day saved."

When had I made acknowledgment of his words and had turned away, I beheld close at hand the Baron de Wycherly gazing at me with look of much wonder. Then did he, with eyes opened to full width, ask of me:

"What is this I hear, my boy? Do my ears play on me

some trick of scurvy kind, or did that officer of the Queen's household call thee Sir Walter Wynnington?"

"In truth, sir," made I then reply, "he so called me, since is that same my name and title."

"'Tis your name surely, yet when came to you the title?"

"Sir," said I with respectful bow, "came that same to me some few moments now gone by, with certain taps of light fashion upon my shoulder from a sword in the fair right hand of good Queen Bess."

"And spoke the officer as well of some ancient friend whose life thou didst save."

"True, sir, did he have in mind none other than Don José, whose life will the Queen spare, albeit sending him beyond seas."

"And hath she done this thing—ah—Sir Walter, at thy intercession?"

"'Tis true, sir, that I strove to show that were my tutor not guilty of the charge for which was he condemned to death; and did I as well beg of her that he might not be sent to block on such small proof."

And now stood the Baron de Wycherly deep pondering, as if he comprehended not how this might have come to pass. Moved his lips in slight way, yet came there forth no words. Did I deem that he had lost for the moment power of speech by reason of that same perplexity into which had he been thrown. Yet knowing full well that would his use of tongue come back to him in due time, I took my leave of him in way of much respect, albeit did he no more than gaze after me with blank look. And then, as walked I in brisk way toward the river side, I perceived that the sun had sunk low. Likewise had I

now a sense of hunger, the which had not come to me through the hours of long waiting. When had I reached the landing, I found that I were like to tarry there some while ere came along the barge which I should take. Might I have walked along the Kent and Surrey shore, and thus have come to my inn. Yet did I deem it wise to await the barge. And when at length I stood upon its planks, came there the thought that, among the divers persons who sat there, were none with such cause for thankfulness as had Sir Walter Wynnington. Was I not now minded to take seat, so stood I alone, gazing out upon the waters. And thus did I float in triumph toward the Tower.

XVIII.

THE KNIGHT'S HOME-COMING.

Would I have wished to land upon the Surrey shore of Thames, nigh to my inn. Yet went the barge upon the other side of the broad stream, so that when came I to step ashore I found before me once again the high walls, which did I now rejoice to think were like to hold Don José for but yet a little while. Made I then haste to find some pleasant cook-shop; and came I soon upon just such a place as had I wish to enter. Then did I with supper, of right good fowl, well roasted, and a small flask of red wine from a tavern hard by, make some amends for loss of that day's dinner. And while consuming much I thought that mayhap at that same moment was Don José enjoying in his Tower cell the supper which had I caused to be sent him, and which he deemed no doubt to be his last feast. When at length had I paid my reckoning, and went forth into the busy streets with cheerful sense of hunger well appeased, was darkness falling. Then perceived I lights within shops and houses, while bore many persons torches and yet others held lanterns, lighting in dim way the restless scene. Was I now minded to gain the Tower-landing with end to crossing to my inn; and as I walked along came I upon a throng which stood without the lighted window of a shop. Then felt I a hand upon my shoulder, and turning, I saw a stranger attired in a

shabby way, who looked me sharply in the face, and said:

"Crave I thy pardon, young master, for did I take thee to be no less than the son of old Squire Kirby of Cornwall, whom have I known well these ten years. Art thou like to him in shape and way of motion. Yet do I now perceive thou art more full in face than he."

Gave I the man assurance that were I in no way put out at this his error, and then I pressed quickly through the throng. Was there now moonlight, and did the Tower to my eyes look vaster than had it seemed in day. And as I passed it by came there into my mind the thought that if my old tutor know not of his deliverance until the morn, would his sleep that night he none the less sound and peaceful. At the Tower-landing came I on one ancient waterman, with long white locks, who bargained to row me cross the Thames. And, unlike him who had ferried me before, was this man full as grave and silent as old Charon of the Styx. When had he guided his small bark up to the landing on the Surrey side nigh to my inn, and I had stepped ashore, did I put hand in pocket for my purse. Then to my dismay found I that was this gone. Then came the thought that had the stranger who stopped me on the crowded way but made pretence that he took me for young Kirby. And was I now of full belief that while had this fellow my attention, some comrade of his own thrust quick his hand into my pocket and drew forth my purse. Yet was I minded that it would be vain for me to seek to get back my own. But as I made search in pocket I found some coins of silver, which had I thrust therein when came I from the cook-shop. Thus was I able now to give to this old waterman his full toll. When came I to

the Falcon Inn, sat in his doorway my host, who asked of me how I had fared throughout the day.

"In truth, friend," made I reply, "have I fared both well and ill this day."

"In what way hast thou fared ill, my young gentleman?"

"Came there hand of some rogue within my pocket and took from thence my last guinea."

"How now?" did the man exclaim, rising to his feet in uneasy way, and looking at me with suspicion in his eye. Then demanded he in harsh voice: "Yet how shalt thou pay thy reckoning to me, standing as do I in need of every penny of the same?"

"As to that," said I in cool fashion, "have I not in thy stable a good fleet mare that will on the morrow fetch far more than the amount of this small reckoning of mine?"

"Is that same mare well enough, young gentleman; yet may the true owner of a beast lay claim unto such wheresoe'er he chances upon it. And how know I that thou hast come in honest way by the mare?"

"Dost thou mean to say, man, there is aught about my look that gives color to suspicion that I lack honesty?"

"Are the looks of one not always proof of what he is," said my host. "Have I in faith been taken in by more than one rogue of honest look. Canst thou name no man in London who will go surety for thee that thou art honest, and seek'st not to impose on me?"

"Am I full sure that will the Baron de Wycherly vouch that I would tell thee no untruth."

"Know I naught of this, thy Baron de—whate'er may be his name? Canst tell me where he dwells?"

"As to that may I not say, albeit I saw and had speech with him some few hours since at Court." Whereat did my host laugh in scornful way, since no doubt he deemed that I had spoke this thing in jest. Next I said: "Has my guardian, Sir Francis Wynnington, of Bidwell, in this same County of Surrey, friends in London to whom he said I might go, should I chance to have need of aught. One of these gentlemen whom he named is Sir Lawrence Warren."

"Know I not who may be thy Knight. But canst thou take me to him?"

"Nay," made I reply with smile at thought of my vain search for Sir Lawrence in the bustling street, "might we not find it easy task to reach his lodgings."

"Ho, my young gentleman, hast thou the assurance again to name one to vouch for thee, when can he not be found?"

"Yet, friend, shall I name to the one gentleman who hath known me right well, and likewise may I say where he doth lodge. Is he Don José de Madura, and hath he for some little time dwelt just across the Thames within the Tower."

"What villainy hath he done to thus earn him lodgings there?" did my host ask with a sneer.

"He is true man and upright, and on the morrow will be set free. Yet since will he then at once go yond seas am I minded to give rather the name of yet another; and this one wilt thou deem a full and sufficient surety for myself. And likewise is her dwelling easy to be found."

"So this one, my young gentleman, doth chance to be a woman. Is she maid, wife or widow?"

"Is she yet maiden, albeit a royal one. In truth do I name now as one to vouch for me, Elizabeth our Queen."

"Hast thou stood in presence of her?" exclaimed my host with wonder in his face, albeit he looked at me in searching way, as if to make sure I did neither jest nor had lost my wits.

"In truth, friend, gave she me audience but few hours since; and moreover did she then confer upon me order of knighthood. And youth though I am, may I none the less be called Sir Walter Wynnington."

Then it seemed to dawn upon the man that had I spoke to him from the first naught save truth. And did his manner toward myself change quickly. Bowing low he said to me in way of much respect:

"In faith, Sir Walter, did I but ask thee questions of such kind to end that I might be assured of mine own safety in having dealings with thee touching this mare of thine. And, Sir Walter, have I learned to act in way of caution with strangers, since have such had from me on wrong pretence sums of the which stand I yet in need. But now that I know thee, Sir Walter, will I upon the morrow bring to thee a dealer who will purchase thy mare." And then rubbing much his hands: "What may I now prepare for thy supper, Sir Walter?"

"In truth, friend," made I reply, "I supped yond Thames at a certain cook-shop."

Whereat made my host a wry face, saying that they of cook-shops did wrong honest publicans, and as well such as chanced by ill-luck to sit at their tables, since was the food which they set forth not to the palate as was that which might be had at any inn. Then he assured me that

upon the morn I would break fast in a way well befitting my rank. Now for the first time had I sense of weariness from the many steps and anxious waitings of the long day. Yet ere I sought my rest, went I to the stable to see that the roan mare were well cared for. Was the first sleep of my knighthood a sound one, lasting till were the sun well up. Then kept my host his promise, for did I break fast with bread, meat, and small ale which found I greatly to my liking. And waited he himself upon the board, meanwhile heaping upon me many Sir Walters. When I arose at length, said he with much smoothness in his tone:

"Have I sent, Sir Walter, for an honest dealer of horses, whom am I full sure I may prevail upon to buy thy mare. Look I for this man within an hour."

When had I thanked him for the interest which seemed he now to take in this matter, went I forth and came by the river's side. Did I then note that the Tower had no longer in my eyes the grim look it wore one morn gone by when first I beheld it, and when within it was my friend condemned to death. Soon weighed I in my mind what chance I might have of seeing Don José once again, when should I have done with the horse dealer. Just then I perceived a ship with sails hoisted and lying to just abreast the Tower. Then there seemed to come alongside this craft a small boat. And soon the ship filled her sails and beat gainst the wind on her way down stream. Came now into my mind the thought that mayhap they had put upon this same ship my old friend Don José. Did I watch the ship in eager way when came she in her beating toward the Surrey shore. And as she swung her head again about, I saw a figure limping slowly on her deck.

Knew I at once this might be the step of no man on earth save Don José. Cried I then out at top of voice, and did wave my arms in hope that I should catch his eye. Yet he perceived me not; and as the wind now veered in way to favor the ship's sailing nearer to her course, she came not again toward Surrey, but kept fast down the stream.

Was that the last glimpse I ever had of this brave and kindly soldier, who had been to me friend as well as tutor. Came there to me some months thereafter a letter, brought by a certain friend of Sir Harry Bullard by name of Hawkins, which had been writ to me by Don José. In this did he express much love and gratitude to myself for having saved his life, albeit had he grown full weary of this world. Yet, in that had I been at such labor in this same matter for his own sake, had he been touched; and would his latest prayer be offered up for me. Had Sir Harry Bullard sent unto him that same Missal, which my sire did bequeath to him; and prized he this above all his other belongings. And glad was I one day to learn that Squire Canby had not fled the realm, but had journeyed into Devon with view of buying sheep of some new breed. Was it likewise shown that the letter which had Don José brought into England was writ in all good faith. And came it to pass that through this were certain sheep sent into Spain by the Squire, who had for them in exchange Spanish sheep of a breed that may yet be seen at White-oak. But was my heart made sad about one year after his deliverance from London Tower, to learn that my old friend had passed away. Died he at the castle of his comrade at arms in Portugal. And when they buried him was his beloved Missal in the coffin nigh to the hand which had so often turned its pages.

When had the ship which bore Don José passed from out my view I returned to the inn, where found I my host in converse with a small man, whom did I note had a most tight mouth and a sharp nose, and as well yet sharper eyes. Was this man then made known to me as one Dickle, who sold and bought horses.

"Know I full well," said my host, "that Sir Walter may find no one minded to deal with him in such honest way as my friend, who hath come here at my bidding."

Did Dickle not seem to heed this lauding of his honesty, but when opened he his mouth to my host, he said that his throat were sadly parched. Whereat made I request of him that he should remove this same affliction at my expense by means of good ale. Gave he consent in ready way to do this; and when was the drink brought to him in a large measure, drained he that to the last drop without one pause. Next he opened his tight mouth to utter some jest that in my ear sounded flat, yet which brought from the publican roars of laughter. And did his own eyes twinkle, while smiled he in way that bespoke his firm belief that he were true wit. Then Dickle gave expression of his readiness to look at the mare. When had we come into the stable, and he had first cast his eye upon the mare, he said betwixt his teeth, as if to himself, and with a shake of head in doubtful fashion:

"So, so—she be a roan."

While looked Dickle closely at her, weighing each of her points with seeming care, did I as well watch his face, the lines of which seemed slowly to contract, as if had he perceived some grievous faults. And in truth, as I thereafter found, was it shortcomings rather than good points for which were he seeking. Yet had this mare far more

to commend than to condemn her. When had Dickle at length come to end of his scrutiny, both by eye and touch, did he name over each one of her faults, making these to seem far greater than they were in truth. Then I asked of him if she had not certain good points, the which I as well named. Shook he his head, and did say that were these of value only when marred not by such blemishes as had this animal. Then went he on in this way:

"Would she were in color aught else than roan. Might she be sold to few; are not the lower gentry, or the more wealthy of the tradesmen now minded to ride roans. Say they oft unto me: 'Dickle, I would buy of thee a horse. Let it be any color thou may'st see fit to get, save only that it be not roan.' Now, Sir Walter, if this mare were but black, or bay, or white, might I give thee for her ten, or twelve, or even fifteen guineas. Yet, since is she but roan, and hath these blemishes I named, have I no warrant to offer to thee more than five guineas."

Said he this in tone and manner which seemed to declare that would he not add so much as one farthing to the price he had just named. Then did my host with seeming frankness say:

"Is five guineas a good, fair sum, Sir Walter, to pay for this mare, when hath she defect of being roan, and as well those blemishes which hath my friend already pointed out. Wilt thou be wise, Sir Walter, to close the bargain."

Perceived I now that these fellows, knowing my needs, had in secret put their heads together to end of fleecing me. And since was I within their power did I deem it wise to put good face upon the matter, and to refuse not the price which had been fixed. When had I declared that I would take this offer for the mare, did I pat her on her

sleek shoulder in way of farewell, hoping in my heart that she might have good master. When had we come again into the inn Dickle counted out five guineas, ringing each upon a table that I might perceive from the sound it were no false coin. And as I gathered up the pieces, he said in tone of one who takes much pride unto himself:

"Do I ne'er pay out aught but good money. Has there come to me many who have said: 'Dickle, have I horse that I would part with to thee at thine own price, since am I assured thou payest none but good pieces.' In faith would I ne'er offer to any man coin which knew I to be of false metal."

"That thou surely wouldst not, friend Dickle," put in the publican.

I now asked of my host to name what sum had my score grown to. After much seeming perplexity and likewise many countings of fingers, he said that was my reckoning in full just one guinea and ten shillings and sixpence. When had I given him two guineas, and he had made return to me of the half of one of these in silver coins, did I perceive that three of the shillings had a most scurvy look. When had I these pointed out, and asked of him if he deemed them fair and lawful pieces, he thanked me for having told him of this. And making good the coins, he said it were ever his strife to stand with Dickle in the matter of good money. Then Dickle gave expression of the truth that had his thirst again come upon him. Had he no doubt wish that he might drink once more at my expense; yet did he not this thing. Asked I now of the twain questions as to the road o'er which had I passed in mist and darkness on the second night gone by, and of the which had I yet no clear knowledge. And made they

reply touching this in ready way, and each with look as if he were bestowing on me that which was of much value, and yet which he in the fulness of his heart parted with freely. Then as I left the inn did they both call me Sir Walter and bow low, as if in much respect, albeit I doubted not there was within them much of secret laughter.

Kept I on foot along the road, as had they given me direction, and ere long I perceived that were I come to ground that had about it somewhat of familiar look. Then was I assured that though I must needs do myself the roan mare's work of ambling, yet would I have no cause to stop and ask of strangers where lay my road. Had I ever been much of tramper, and save for the pause of one hour at my dinner beside the door of one decayed and ancient hostel, went I on with firm, light step till sank the sun behind a wooded hill. Then paused I at the Pine Tree Inn; but were there already many guests within, and I was told that must needs a loft be my chamber. Yet was my slumber that night most refreshing. After breaking fast upon the morn, took I to the road once more with step of briskness and with cheerful thoughts. But was I full weary when I had my noonday meal with one small cup of stout ale, brought me by the fair hand of a most buxom lass, the daughter of him who kept the inn where had I made my stop. Did she smile on me in arch way, and oft came into the common room where then I sat, no doubt that she might win from me admiring glance. Lagged much my feet as I again set forth; yet was I cheered by thought that I drew nigh to Bidwell, which might I hope to reach before the sun went down. But soon came there up in sudden way a storm of rain,

which poured down in most heavy fashion. Was I then upon a broad heath where was no shelter to be had, and so was I soon drenched unto the skin. Did the rain slacken much when were I come to a place where was the way much narrowed by tall bushes on either hand. Were I no more than half of the way through this, when fell there upon my head a blow.

The next which had I remembrance of was a sense of much soreness nigh to my crown. Then did I find myself stretched upon the earth, without coat or hat, or even belt and small-sword. Gone as well was my light purse and pistol. Had I no doubt been felled by thick club in the hand of some foot-pad, who then lurked amid the tall bushes, and who while I lay without sense did rob me of these things. Might I have lain thus upon the ground for full an hour's time. Had now the sun come forth once more and shone warmly, else would I have been chilled. Was there much blood upon my shirt, and in my hair nigh to the wound, which was just above the left temple. When had I, yet in dazed way, staggered on to where the road once more widened out, I perceived a small brook. And o'er this I bent low and washed well the wound; and next I laved my face and cleansed in part my shirt, within the breast of which found I my kerchief. This wrapped I with much of care about my head, and thereby covered well the wound. Then did I turn again into the way and keep on toward Bidwell. Chanced it that I passed upon the road none save one gentleman astride a fine white horse. And behind him there sat one pretty maid, who gazed down at me with look of horror. Then clung she most tightly unto his arms, and I heard him tell her to have no fear, since was I no doubt some

gentle youth, fresh from much gambling and merrymaking at the Bullshead Inn. And did there in truth at that same house of entertainment oft take place things of the kind he named.

When at length with most weary steps walked I up the avenue at Bidwell and came nigh the Hall, did I perceive seated upon the porch, and watching the fine red glow upon the western sky, Sir Francis and my Lady, and as well Walter of Surrey. And stood apart from them with most respectful mien good Master Hackett. As their glance fell from the bright sky down to the young tarnished Knight, was there at first much wonder in their faces. Next did I note that seemed the tutor pained, as if in sympathy for me. But the youth burst out in laughter at the sorry sight which then I offered. Looked then his sire at him in reproving way; but did the Lady Wynnington gaze on me in scorn. As came I up the steps, bowing unto my elders, asked Sir Francis of me:

"What of thy friend, Don José?"

"Sir," made I reply, "is he now by the grace of God on board ship that is bearing him hence in safety."

"And thou, Walter——"

"And he," broke in his spouse in tone of much contempt, "Dost thou not for thyself see this to be in truth no more than one young wretch, foul and besmeared."

"Nay, madam," I said in firm one, "am I no wretch. But, by the grace of Elizabeth, the Queen, am I Sir Walter Wynnington."

XIX.

GENTLEFOLK.

When had I made change of my apparel, and had as well put on a coat and fresh bandage upon my wound, went I down to appease hunger. And while sat I at supper came in Sir Francis, with his wife and son, and Hackett as well. To them did I relate at length what had befallen me; and when at last was I at end of this, I said to my guardian:

"Wilt thou be pleased, sir, to put the five-and-twenty guineas which am I rid of, as well as the value of the roan mare, to the charge of my yet cumbered estate. Albeit would I wish thee to set down the mare's price at far more than the sum of five guineas which had I from Dickle."

"Did I give eight-and-twenty guineas for that same mare," made he reply. "Yet shalt thou pay for her and as well make return of the same sum I loaned thee, when art thou come of full age, and hast thy heritage much more free of debt than is it now. As I warned thee, Walter—pardon me, I crave, for that I may not always be minded to call thee Sir—there were rogues abroad; and wert thou well in their hands at Court, at inn, and on the highway. Like unto my namesake of France, at Pavia, hast thou lost all save honor; yet of that same hast thou gained much. And in truth," here did he lay hand upon my shoulder in a most kindly way, "am I, and as should

be all other Wynningtons, full proud of thee, my young Knight."

When was I telling of the Palace my Lady made oft her interruptions to ask touching the hangings and the woods and marbles. And to her gave I answer as best I might, albeit not as fully as would she have wished, since did much of that sort escape my eye. And when I told how I had first perceived the great Elizabeth, did she stop me to ask, what manner of royal robe I saw upon her. Then I made answer that could I not tell aught about this save that it had look of costly fabric. Next my Lady asked about the jewels which the Queen wore, and such like matters; and when had I in small way her curiosity relieved touching these she said, albeit in tone of but slight vexation, that I were a stupid Knight to note so little of what was most pleasing to the eye. Did Sir Francis put with show of much interest questions about the sword which had Elizabeth laid upon my shoulder in gentle taps.

From that same even was there change of bearing toward myself in the Lady Wynnington. Albeit would she no doubt rather have it said that her Walter had gone to Court and had been shown favor by the Queen. Yet in that this same thing happened to me, did she now deem myself in some way as worthy of respect. As well her Walter harkened to me more often in the lesson-room, when would I in pleasant way ask of him to cease the tricks which he were minded to play upon Master Hackett. Nor was it long ere I perceived the scapegrace were striving to make copy of me in some ways. As to Master Hackett himself, could I not at first bring him to take up again with much of interest our lessons, for would his mind seem to wander from the task. And oft when would

I look up quick at him would I perceive him looking at me in wonder, as if could he not in full way have comprehension that I had undergone so much in four short days.

And was it soon noised about that I had gone to Court and had been knighted. For this same thing no doubt would certain ones when I passed them on the road gaze on me in fixed way, whereas had they erstwhile been wont to pass me with scarce a glance. And once, some hours past the noon, as went I on foot by the Bullshead Inn, came out therefrom a goodly company to behold me. And some, more gone in drink than were the rest, called after me in jesting way. To this I deemed it wise to give no heed. Had I before known few of all the gentlefolk of the country round about Bidwell. When had the Lady Wynnington been minded to go abroad to make her visits, would she take her Walter, and sometimes as well her spouse, leaving me with Hackett for my company. And if there came to Bidwell some families in turn to pay visits, perceived I from my Lady's look that I would not be welcome at the board; and so supped I with the tutor. Knew I full well that my guardian did make protest gainst this same thing many times; yet had not prevailed his wishes in the matter. But now was there a change, and were I bidden to see the company which came, and as well to go abroad with the other Wynningtons to be with them entertained by their friends. One day when had I been sent for by my Lady, was I made known to her guests, Squire Hardy and his wife. Was the Squire tall and rawboned and stooped much. His Dame had upon her face, which was round and not much wrinkled for her years, a smile which no doubt she did deem a most pleasing one. Yet had she so o'erdone this same, that

seemed it unto myself to partake more of grimace than smile. In a pleasant voice she said to me:

"To think, Sir Walter, that at such tender age thou shouldst gain Court honors! Would that my son Richard might do likewise. Thou shalt see and know Dick, for is he nigh to thine own size and age, though is he a year or more younger than his sister Judith, who is in truth a sweet girl. Thou wilt come and sup with us at Thornhill this day week, wilt thou not?"

Gave I her assurance that I would find pleasure in going to Thornhill at the time she named. Then was she asked by Lady Wynnington if she were not minded to go into the kitchen and see a certain jam which was the cook then in preparation of. When had left us the twain did I listen to the Squire, as told he Sir Francis in rambling way of a hunt some two days gone by at Shorley Manor some twenty mile away, where had he seen a breed of hounds which had pleased him much. While was the Squire yet telling of these same hounds, I chanced to go nigh a window that was open. Then did I perceive beneath me my Lady and Dame Hardy, who were both bending o'er some plants. Then heard I the Squire's spouse to ask:

"Be not his estates of Merton large?"

"Nay," my Lady made reply, "are these not so large; and moreover are they cumbered much with debts, the which are like to rest there through his life."

Whereat I perceived upon the face of good Dame Hardy what seemed a look of worriment. Though knew I that she were speaking of myself, did I not then have comprehension of why the knowledge of my poverty should drive from off her face her large and wonted smile. When sat

we at supper did I act in way of great respect toward this lady, yet were she so taken up with praising Surrey Walter, to his fond mother's great delight, that she paid small heed unto myself. Nor when she took her leave did she give to me reminder that I were to sup at Thornhill that day week. Yet when had come this time, did I repair unto the ancient manor-house of Squire Hardy, where I perceived naught that would bespeak much wealth. Was the Dame in her manner somewhat cold as she gave unto myself a greeting. Did the tall Squire give me one small nod, together with a word or two my ears caught not. And was Master Dick an o'ergrown youth, far taller and of greater weight than I. Were his eyes small and his face thick covered with red pimples. Seemed he quite shy of me, and were I not minded to press myself upon him. Yet was his sister Judith disposed to make amends for the others' coldness toward me. And did she seem to have somewhat of sweetness in her nature, albeit were she not of fair exterior. Was she like to her brother, of poor complexion; and as well had she a squint of right eye which was not pleasing. Yet was I not minded to make plain to her that her lack of beauty, e'en when were her sweetness weighed, made her not attractive unto the other sex. And so I bore myself toward her in right gallant way, which caused her eyes to sparkle with pleasure. Yet did not her mother seem well pleased that I should thus in small way strive to pay honor to her offspring. And when took I my leave, she did not bid me come again to Thornhill. The next day the Lady Wynnington asked of me if I had been treated in way of warmth by my new-made friends, the Hardys.

Nay, madam," I made reply, "were they full cold in

bearing toward myself, all save young Mistress Judith, who——"

"Young Mistress Judith!" made she interruption. "Dost thou know the age of her?"

"Did her mother say, madam, that she were older by a year or more than her brother, who is nigh to my own age."

"Art thou, Walter, eighteen this autumn, and will Richard be seventeen next spring. And were Judith just past her eighth birthday when was her brother born."

Did she then question me further touching my visit at Thornhill, and when had I made my replies, she said:

"Dost thou not perceive the truth of this matter? Was the Dame's great change toward thyself for reason that, when she came here with thought to bid thee to Thornhill, she had thee in her mind, youth though thou art, as a suitor for her Judith, whom would she fain see married. When had she learned of me that the estates of Merton were encumbered much, did she bestow no more upon thee that smile of hers. Nor would she have minded hadst thou not gone at all to Thornhill. Yet when thou didst go, and bore thyself in gallant way towards her daughter liked she not this, since would she not have friendship twixt thee and Judith, as might thou thus stand in way of some suitor with sufficient fortune."

Dwelt there not far from Bidwell a new-made gentleman, albeit had he declared himself to be of ancient blood. Had he gained much wealth in London, as tradesman of some sort were it said by many. Did these same ones protest that he had no right to claim his coat-of-arms, though had he received this from proper source. And moreover made he in stout way denial that he had paid

one large purse of gold to be made gentleman. Was his house large and new; and within this were Squire Jarvis, as loved he to be called, glad to treat in way of hospitality such of the gentlefolk as were minded to thus honor him. Yet came not many of such unto his door, albeit upon cold nights would youths of good families on way home, or else while going to the houses of others of quality, pause and drop in with thought to take from his hand some heated drink, and as well to warm themselves before his fire. And came there no ladies from round about to make visit at this house. Had the new Squire for his wife a pleasant woman who wore well her years. Was there a daughter married to a young physician, who dwelt with them, and likewise a son who long had known not good health. And 'twas said by the gossips he had brought on him his disorders through toiling o'ermuch within his father's shop. Passed I at times within their doors, where had I much of welcome. And found I these people to be pleasant hosts, and as well of good manners, and withal possessed of far more knowledge than had many who oft spoke of them in most scornful way. Yet did I think 'twould be wiser on their part if they sought not to stand mong those who were not minded to mingle with them. Once when came I to their house, was there on visit with them some folk from London, whom had they long known and who were of more humble sort than they themselves. Then did Jarvis and his wife, and as well his daughter, bear themselves toward me in familiar way, oft calling me Sir Walter, and meanwhile watching their friends to perceive if were not these much impressed at seeing them upon such easy terms with a young Knight of ancient family.

And would I as well at times make my respectful bow unto the Lady Hinsdale, wife of Sir Joseph Hinsdale, who dwelt in one wing of Hinsdale Hall, since had all the rest of their once proud manor fallen into sad decay. Held my Lady yet some of her beauty, which had in truth once been great. And, long years afore had she been to Court; so would she ne'er tire of telling to me of that one most happy day of all her life. And as well would she ask of me to repeat to her o'er and o'er again, the story of how had I stood before Elizabeth. Would she with sad face declare that she had much of pity for they who had neither been to Court, nor lived in hope that some day they might go thither. As for her two daughters, tall, fine maids with flaxen hair and doll faces, was she of firm belief that each of the twain would some day have this same honor which had fallen to her lot. And would I bear myself in gallant way toward the fair ones, at which would they simper much and toss each her head, albeit showing that had in some measure her vanity been fed by me. Had old Sir Joseph, as sat he apart in gloomy fashion, naught to say of the Queen's grand Court. Yet must he have thought full oft of the Law Court, through which did press him in grievous fashion they who in his younger day had loaned him large sums, the which had he then sought that he might waste the same in sumptuous manner.

Some ten miles from Bidwell stook Keating Castle, the seat of Henry, Earl of Surrey. Had he a son, nigh to twenty years of age, who was called Lord Harry. And came there word to us that this same Lord Harry and two guests of his, would on a certain day be pleased to have with them the two Walters. Did my Lady plan to have

her son look most trim and spruce on the visit to Keating, and were he given much fine lace, of which thing was my own supply quite small. Yet when came the day for our going, was Surrey Walter pale and dull of look from too much eating, and would not his anxious mother permit of his now passing from out her watchful care. So set I out alone upon the most sorry beast that found grain and shelter in Bidwell stables. Did Sir Francis offer me use of his new black horse, yet was I mindful that I had lost for him his fleet roan, and giving thanks for this his offer, I said that since might misfortune o'ertake me on the road, as had it done before, should no dealer get much the best of me in bargain for my beast. When had I come to Keating Castle, was I given welcome in way of easy grace by young Lord Harry, a dark, well-looking youth who led me to his other guests. And now I beheld in truth Henry de Wycherly and his brother Paul. Did Henry look right glad to see me as he grasped my hand. Yet Paul seemed to give me his hand in grudging way, and was there sour look upon his face as he asked of me how I liked dwelling with my guardian. But with friendly pat upon my shoulder Henry said to me:

"And to think thou hast been to Court, and come away with a title to thy name. Glad am I indeed that thou art Knight."

Just then I perceived that Paul were looking at me with the old unpleasant grin upon his face, as if he were minded in sneering fashion to say:

"And in truth is he a pretty Knight!"

At length Lord Harry asked of me if I had liking for crossing foils that day, and when had I replied that the same would give to me much of pleasure, he said that he

himself, and his friends, the two de Wycherlys, had for fencing a great fondness. As led he the way toward the room where were they wont to fence, came upon us the Earl of Surrey, who was tall and held high up his dark and well-bearded head. Had I seen him but once afore, when were he riding with Lord Harry by his side. Did he now take notice of me, albeit in lofty way, and then asked of me touching my audience with the Queen. When had I made him full answers did he nod with complacent smile and turn away. Had he then mayhap a sense of pride in his great Earldom, the which might cause him to look on knighthood as but small business. When had we come to the room for fencing, Lord Harry and myself chose our foils and began work, he in eager way, and I with much of coolness. Had we made exchange of scarce a dozen strokes, when perceived I a chance to put to use one of Don José's tricks; and was Lord Harry quickly disarmed. Four other times did he approach me, and as oft was he disarmed. Was there look of much displeasure in the face of young Paul when our host declared that he were well beaten, and asked of Henry if he had the courage to enter now the lists gainst the champion from Bidwell. Yet was Henry ever a plucky lad, so did he try me with the foils, only to be as much loser at the game as had Lord Harry himself.

And now Paul tried his hand, picking up a foil from the tip of which had fell the button. And with this made he at myself, lunging in frantic way, no doubt with full intent to give me some deep scratch with the sharp point. Did I ward off these unskilful blows with much of ease, as came he again and again at me. And grew he more wroth and eager, while his brother and our host laughed

at his vain efforts. Yet at last was he worn out and short of breath, to regain the which did he drop his foil and sink in gasping way upon a chair. Then I made known to the others how had I the advantage of having been taught to fence by a most skilled master of the art, who had tutored me as well in French and Spanish. As I said this the face of Lord Harry brightened, and he began to speak to me in bad French. When made he a pause I replied to him in the same tongue. Did he now perceive from my accent and readiness of speech that had I far more mastery o'er the language than himself. Whereat seemed he to reflect in sober way upon this truth, which knew I to be a far from pleasing one to him. When had Paul gained his breath once more, he said in disappointed tone:

"Too bad it is there might not come to us to-day Walter Wynnington of Bidwell. Might we have got some real pleasure with him."

Now was I mindful that this sour lad had beheld me, for whom he had no liking, a victor both with the foil and with the tongue, and that he was from this cause exceeding angry. So did I deem it well to make him no return for this same thrust. When at length I took my leave, was Henry de Wycherly pleasant in his words and bearing. Did Lord Harry speak smoothly, albeit not asking me to come again to Keating. And was there in his manner that which led me to belief that in his heart he yet begrudged me my triumphs o'er him. As to young Paul, did he nod stiffly, and then glare at me with look of downright hatred. As rode I homeward I said to myself that albeit this same castle of Keating had high walls, which were as well most thick and strong, yet was there

within the place far less that might yield comfort than had I seen in manor-houses of certain Squires. In truth had my friend Jarvis more to boast of in this way than the lofty Earl of Surrey.

Not long thereafter were the two Walters bidden to come to Ealing House, where was dwelling for the time the Baron de Port, who had two sons of about twenty years of age. And would these young gentlemen fain be upon a certain afternoon our hosts. This time did Surrey Walter take care not to prevent his visit by the overeating of himself; and so rode we together unto Ealing, he on his sire's new black horse, and I upon the same old nag which had borne me to Keating Castle. Were our hosts both bright, merry lads, with large blue eyes and curly hair; and did they give to us most hearty welcome. As well had their sire, the Baron, a pleasant word to say to each Walter. Was he stout of make, and were his features most fine and regular. Yet was he dressed in plain fashion, and were his manners simple, while wore he not the haughty look that did many of his rank. Was the elder of our young hosts named Herbert, and the younger Frank. Like to myself had they long been motherless, yet had they both remembrance of their lost parent, of the whom spoke Frank in loving way, and with a tear upon the lid of each blue eye, while Herbert though silent wore most sad look upon his face. Was Kate, who kept the keys of Ealing, a woman of pleasant mien, who brought to my mind Jane Edmunds. Had the lads a tutor, who were now upon a visit to his home in Devon. This tutor, Master Mallow, had been at Oxford, and was learned likewise in French. Could he ride well, and fence in skilful way. His pupils told us that at lessons was he

a cross and crabbed man, and that yet betwixt studies were he most merry in his ways, saying most comic things. Then did Herbert ask if we fenced. To this Walter of Surrey, with a blush no doubt at thought that his fond mother would not permit of his using foils, made reply that had he small liking for this thing, yet were the other Walter good at fencing. Was I now minded that when at Keating had my triumph brought no pleasure to my host; and so when Herbert and myself took up our foils, made I resolve to spare this my rival aught that might humiliate his pride. So used I not my best strokes, but strove to fence not one whit better than might he himself. And when was he, for want of breath, content to stop with neither one the victor, did I, in feigned way, puff full as hard as he. When had I seemed once more to have my breath I tried the foils with Frank, whom did I permit to come off full as well as had the heir of the de Ports. And when there seemed to be with me the second time my breath, I weighed my hosts as to their progress in the language of the French. Perceived I that in their speech of that tongue had they faults, yet strove I not to correct these, but spoke in same fashion as they, halting oft, as if to call to my mind the phrase I fain would use, and likewise twisting many words and giving to much of these false accent. In truth were we quits at this same game of French, just as had we been when we fenced. So, when did we part were both of my young rivals sworn friends of mine, who vowed that in the future we should oft meet.

One day, when rode my young kinsman and myself to Barton Hall, who should I find there as guest of my Lady

Barton but Maud de Wycherly. When our hostess, still a handsome woman and given much to please with flattery, made known Surrey Walter unto the charming maid, gazed he at her in entranced way; and she perceiving this, shone on him with her bright and sparkling eyes. Had she no doubt the full intent of making him her slave. Then, betwixt the whiles when had she upon her hands the enchantment of the swain of Surrey, she strove with all her arts to win back the devotion of him of Kent. Although I bore myself in gallant manner toward her, bestowing many compliments, yet could I not look at her in the old way of worship. Had I not yet forgotten the day, when stood I neath the tall tree nigh to Hazel Lodge, and received from her sharp tongue most cruel stabs. Might still her eyes blaze forth their most winsome light, yet on me was that same doomed to be forever wasted. And did this very truth soon seem to dawn upon the mind of Maud, who looked not kindly on my lasting change of heart. Yet now had she the more time to cast her spells o'er Surrey Walter, who was at no pains to conceal his budding love for her. When at last we took our leave, did Maud bestow on him her softest glances, and as well sweet words; while to myself she gave the faintest nod, and this with tight-closed lips. As rode we back to Bidwell turned my companion oft to me in way of triumph, yet saying naught. When at length I asked of him if he were not well pleased with charming Maud, burst he forth in clumsy words of praise, and did he in loud voice declare there were none in all the world like unto this maid. And then spoke he in this way:

"At first, Walter, she smiled on thee as well as on my-

self; but in the end, ha! ha! did I triumph, and looked she not on thee again. Yet sad will I be, my friend, if in winning her it shall break thy heart."

While gave I to him assurance that would his happiness with Maud cause me no pang, did I wonder in my heart if sweet Constance Leigh beyond the seas had grown in the flesh as had she done in my imagery.

XX.

THE PEASLEYS OF PERLING MANOR.

Ran my life on smoothly, and with naught of newness or incident, which do I now recall, until the year 'Ninety-six, when was there much talk of the war with Spain. Yet was there this time no fear within our England of a vast Armada. The rather was the fear of the coming fleet with Spain. And was I minded to go with our fleet now fitting out; so I asked of Sir Francis his permission to seek from the Queen some post neath Blake, the Admiral, who was to take command. Did I point out that, with my knowledge of the tongue of Spain, might I prove most fit and useful for this same enterprise of war. To this Sir Francis, when had he weighed it well, gave his consent, and was there day fixed for my departure. When was it made known to the Lady Wynnington that I were like to be soon off for foreign wars, came she to myself in secret with tears upon the lashes of her eyes, and said:

"I do beg and beseech of thee, my dear friend, that thou shalt not strive to entice my Walter to go with thee unto the wars. Is he not by nature fitted for such thing; yet might thought of change and of seeing distant lands rouse in him the wish to go with thee. And, if went he thus from his poor mother, would her heart be broken. Promise me that rather than entice him thou shalt urge

him to stay at home by pointing out the many dangers which thou thyself art minded to go through."

"I do vow, madam," made I reply, "that I will act in this same matter as thou dost wish; and will I begin at once to make plain to thy son war's dangers and its trials, of the which have I learned much from my old tutor, who was long one of Fortune's soldiers."

Whereat did the fond mother give to me a kiss, and say that I were in all verity a true friend. Then sought I Surrey Walter, and related to him some of the scenes of blood, and as well of want, which had Don José gone through in his wars. Did my young kinsman listen to all this with show of interest, and when had I come to end, he said:

"If war be such as this, thou art fool to take hand in that same. How canst thou tell but chance may throw thee into Spaniards' hands. And then mayhap they shall burn thee at the stake."

"I speak touching these things," made I reply, "so that thou shalt know what dangers are like to beset, if thou should take it into thy head to go with me."

Whereat did he gaze at me in wonder for a moment; and then burst he into laughter, and exclaimed:

"Nay, nay, my kinsman, not I!"

Was I now minded that he had of late seen again the charming Maud, in whose favor did he deem himself to be gaining ground in sure way. Then came to me belief that if naught else should urge him gainst going to the wars, his desire to preserve himself with end to winning this fair maid, would assure his staying snug at home. And did I now perceive why it was that this young namesake of my own had not of late borne himself toward me

in such friendly way as before. Had Maud no doubt spoke ill of me unto this her ardent lover. So, seemed it now to me that, out of his very loyalty to her, were Surrey Walter turning gainst his kinsman. Yet knowing well the power which this maid held o'er his simple nature, had I little heart to reproach him for this thing. As to young Mistress Maud herself, did I hold her quite free to pursue her small plans of vengeance on myself for that I yielded not again unto her wiles. Was the tutor Hackett much cast down at thought of parting with me. Though had the man for myself much of fondness, was he as well no doubt at loss to know how, when I were gone, he might have guidance at his studies.

And yet it came to pass that I went not out to Spain with Blake, our Admiral, but tarried on instead at Bidwell. For it chanced that on the morn next to the one on which had I fixed for my departure, as went I into the stables to have look at the new bay horse, which had Sir Francis bought and bestowed upon myself, did the beast kick out in sudden and vicious way and hit me full upon the shin of my right leg, breaking the bone. And so next day was I upon my couch instead of on the way to London. As was the break not regular in shape, and the bones together grew but slowly, was it many weeks ere I stood firmly once more upon my feet. And then had our Blake been some while gone. Yet was there so little done by England's arms in this same enterprise, that were I thereafter more content that had chance prevented me from joining in the same.

When was my one-and-twentieth birthday come, said my guardian naught to me touching the truth that I were now of age. Yet did I deem it not well to put to him

questions as to his silence in this matter, since might he have some further business with my affairs ere he placed these same in my own hands. And made he more than one journey into Kent, and another as well to London, saying he were gone to attend to certain matters that did press. When had my birthday gone by three full months, and were begun the year of 'Ninety-seven, I saw look of worriment upon his face whene'er I came upon him in sudden way. And when one morn I found him bending o'er his fire and gazing in gloomy fashion into the embers, did he look up at me and say:

"Am I glad thou art come, Walter, since have I something to tell to thee touching thine own affairs. Are there yet heavy debts upon thy estates of Merton. In truth do they to whom have the Courts of Law given use of thy lands, and as well thy dwellings, declare the cumbrances still great. Full sure am I there is somewhere imposition, yet can I not yet lay hand upon the rogue, whoe'er that one may be. For in all this matter do things seem to be done in right form of Law. Yet fear I 'twill be years afore thou canst claim thine own. In truth have the sums, which were to come to thee through myself for thy maintenance and use, not yet been paid me."

"Do I ask of thee, sir," said I now, "to accept of my thanks for that thou hast taken from thine own purse the sums which have been put to my use. Yet am I not minded to be longer a burden upon thee, but rather would I go hence and earn my own bread."

"'Tis well spoke, my boy; yet what may there be at the which shall Sir Walter Wynnington hope to gain his livelihood?"

"Am I not, sir, a master of the French and Spanish tongues, and of the use of swords as well?"

"Thou art so truly, Walter; and if thou art minded to turn tutor, known I of a certain gentleman in Wiltshire who would gladly pay well for one who may instruct his son and heir in these things. Yet hast thou no need to look upon thyself as being driven forth from Bidwell. For here art thou free to tarry, as my friend and kinsman, until such a time as shall thy affairs be set straight, and Merton shall be thine in more than name."

Whereat did I in thanking him for the kindness of his offer, make it clear to him that I would be far more content toiling each day for bread, than fattening upon his bounty. Then said he that there was a matter of his own which he had wish to look to at a place nigh unto Perling Manor, where dwelt Squire Peasley, the one whom had he spoke of as like to give to me the post of tutor to his son. And would he then see him touching this same thing. Departed Sir Francis upon the morrow, and was he gone upon his journey six days. Did he on his return bid me set out for Perling on the morn, since would Squire Peasley have me to tutor his son, whose age were some fourteen years.

"Thou wilt be cared for well, and will receive each year the sum of twenty guineas. Yet hath thy pupil Dick a most dull, albeit an honest look. Thou wilt have hard work to knock thy French and Spanish into his head; and hath he a clumsy way which gives me much doubt of his being ready with the foil. Yet doth his sire, and his mother full as well, call him a right quick pupil. Had they a tutor from Cambridge, who strove in vain to

teach him Greek and Latin. Yet do his fond parents for this same reason declare that he will take the better to the tongues of both France and Spain. But though thou wilt have large labor with this lad, shalt thou find much to console thee in the thought that thereby thou dost the better earn thy bread and wage."

When upon the morn I departed, seemed my good guardian, and Master Hackett as well, to have within their hearts the sorrow which made they expression of. Yet was there in the face of the Lady Wynnington a look which to me did bespeak the truth that she found some secret pleasure in the thought that I were to be no more at Bidwell. Had Surrey Walter no doubt within him some slight pangs at knowledge that a companion of some years were now to be lost to him; yet, mayhap from thoughts of loyalty unto the fair though vengeful Maud, was he minded to show naught of warmth when took we our farewell. But was I well pleased to see that were the servants, one and all, loathe to have me go away. Was the air sharp and dry, while were the ground hard and frozen; and went steadily along my horse with its well-cloaked rider and his belongings in two saddle-bags. Saw I few people upon the road, albeit were there at windows of some of the houses which I passed faces of they who looked out upon me, no doubt with glow of comfort at thought that they were not now abroad and facing the chill wind. When paused I at the inns and had sent my beast into the stable, did I find warmth of blazing fire most inviting, and had I keen appetite for whate'er was set before me. And slept I in sound fashion the two nights when lay I in hostels. Strayed I not many times from off the road and so late in the afternoon of the

third day, when had a cold rain begun to fall in small drops, came I to Perling Manor. Was I there given welcome and shown into the large, pleasant chamber which was to be my own. Was there a fire lit here, and found I this place most cheerful. Had the manor-house of Perling been built but five years before, and was it of brick. Stood it upon the brow of a small hill, and was there from this to be had good view of all the country round about. Was Squire Peasley a man of substance, having as well as his own wide estates, much of wealth that did come to him with his wife, who was fourth daughter of Sir Jasper Jennings, a great merchant.

Did Squire Peasley have red face and hair, with eyes that seemed like to burst from out his head. Was he ever finding cause for wonder in that which he himself spoke of, or in what was told unto him by others. When had he asked of me where I learned the French and Spanish, and as well the art of fencing, which was I to teach to his son, and told I him of my dear old tutor, did his eyes stand out still farther; and gave he utterance to many words of astonishment. Then told he of the tutor from Cambridge who had striven to teach his son; and did he dwell upon the strange and wonderful perversity of this man. And spoke he of his dear son Dick as a lad of keen mind, albeit quick only in modest way. Then he related to me many acts and speeches of his boy that seemed marvelous to him. And some few days thereafter, when rode I with him o'er his estates, did he ever point to some thing he deemed most wonderful. Was the Squire at heart a kindly man, and to his tenants was he right good landlord, pressing not for rent thy who had met with some misfortune. And was he much beloved by all his

servants, to whom was he in truth an easy master. Seemed not Dame Peasley to find, as did her husband, so much to wonder at. Whate'er befell them looked to her no doubt as coming in the order of nature. Was she a comely woman for her years; and on her pleasant face was e'er a smile which to me bespoke much of satisfaction in herself. And like to her husband, had she a kindly heart.

Was my pupil Dick a lad of ungainly bearing, and with great hands and feet. Had he a fair, handsome face, which was frank and honest in its look, albeit was there in the same that which seemed to tell of dullness. And was Dick in truth far from being ready pupil, though hard he strove to learn. Oft would I find him most slow to comprehend that which another of his years might grasp in easy way. Then when had I in most clear terms strove to explain the matter, would be open lips, leaving teeth firm closed, and gaze into my eyes with dumb look. And many times when drew a long lesson to the end, would he have some glimmer of the light which sought I to send into his mind. Yet on the morrow would I perceive that he had forgot the little which had he seemed to have some grasp of but some few hours gone by. And did I now begin my task anew, and with patience. For made I most firm resolve that I would not yield till I might get from out his lips words of France and Spain, which might the people of those lands have some understanding of. And when had I got so far on in this my task as to teach him to repeat, albeit but in parrot style, some few phrases of the French, were his two parents overjoyed. The Squire deemed the progress of his much loved son to be most wonderful; and did his mother's look

of satisfaction seem to bespeak the thought that had he inherited much from her.

And though my toils were great in the guidance of Dick Peasley toward the path of knowledge, yet did I grow to have much of fondness for the lad, since had he shown a kindly heart, and as well much honesty of purpose. Albeit were he at first most awkward with his foil, seemed he at length to o'ercome this, giving promise of some day fencing in proper fashion. Came there few to visit at Perling Manor, and had Master Richard no companion of his own years at hand. Would he and I oft watch from the hill-top the hounds and huntsmen in the distance, as with cries would they pursue poor Reynard. Kept Squire Peasley no kennel of hounds, and went he not to the hunts of they of his neighbors who loved this sport.

XXI.

CROSS SEAS.

Had I been at Perling Manor one year, and some five months more, when my pupil was taken ill and complained of pains within his head. Was sent for old Doctor Grumby, who dwelt hard by Durston Church. When had he questioned much in gruff voice our Richard and had considered of the manner of his pulse, and as well gazed upon his tongue, did the physician nod well his grizzled head and say:

"Hath Dick given more time unto his studies than is meet for one like to him. Will medicines have no avail with him if he be not given rest, and as well a change of air."

Was Squire Peasley stricken with much wonder to learn that had his son's illness come from too much of study. Yet did he not seem minded to cast the blame for this thing upon shoulders of the tutor, as would many fathers in his place have done. When asked he of Doctor Grumby whither it would be well to take Richard for his change of air, the man of medicine made reply:

"'Twould be well to send him o'er the sea into France for some six weeks. Let him not seek large towns, but find rather a quiet hostel where may he spend his nights, while should be passed his days in long rides and walks."

Then, to end that Dick might tide over present needs,

did the good Doctor bleed him to point of fine paleness, and as well cup him full many times. Likewise he left with him much of medicine to be oft swallowed. When had Physician Grumby gone his way, and Dame Peasley had led her son unto his couch, where with tender hand smoothed she out his soft pillow, she and her spouse well weighed this matter of sending Dick across the water for his own good. And did they deem it well to place the lad under my care and direction, albeit were I to grant him rest from all his studies. Gave I to them in ready way my full consent to undertake this thing. Was it agreed that we should ride to Bristol and there take ship for some port of France.

On the morn of the third day thereafter did I set out by Dick's side from Perling Manor with my pocket well lined in way of gold for expense upon the journey. Rode I upon my bay, while was my companion mounted on a fleet black mare. Had I two good pistols, and as well by my side a sharp sword, so that I stood in small fear of foot-pads, or for the matter of highwaymen. Behind us upon a strong-built nag rode Dave Thomas, a faithful serving-man, who had long been a well-fed retainer at Perling Manor. Was there upon this beast as well large saddle-bags, filled to the full with divers garments and articles of need, of the which were the many for use of Master Richard, and the few for Sir Walter. Was our Dave a close-mouthed man of five-and-forty years, who wore look of much importance, save when spoken to by his masters. Unlike the Squire of Perling, whom he deemed as one of the great men of this earth, wore he never on his face an expression of wonder, but seemed rather to have known aforehand all that came to pass.

Rode we to Westward at easy pace all day, save for two hours at the noon when had we good dinner at an inn close by the wayside. That night lay we at the Black Boar Inn, where was the food indifferent; and our three beds, in one large chamber, were hard and not o'er-clean. Had not our host the look of one in whom to place much trust; so when we went to rest I bolted the door, and placed my pistols and the sword as well within easy reach. Was there one large window which did we leave well opened so that we might have the more air, for was the night warm and sultry.

Had the travel of the day wearied much my pupil Dick, whose slow, deep breathing bespoke the truth that were his slumber sound, despite the hardness of his bed. Yet did it seem that sleep were ill-disposed to come to me; and though lay Dave in silent way upon his bed nigh to the window, breathed he not like to one asleep. Might it have been past the midnight hour, when I heard the sound of a horse's hoofs, which seemed to stop at the inn door. Then did I fancy that I heard two voices, which were both low in tone. Not long thereafter I heard a noise, as if some one without were trying our door in soft fashion. Gave me this thing no disquiet, since was I minded that we had fastened well our bolt. Then dropped I off into a doze, from which I soon awoke and perceived upon our window-sill, and as if against the sky with its shining stars, the figure of a man who seemed to be in act of climbing in. Reached I quickly for a pistol, yet ere I found this thing, sprang nimbly to his feet our Dave. Then heard I the thump of his well-closed fist upon the intruder's body. And now did the fellow fall out backward from the window. Then came to my ears

the sound of his striking in heavy way upon the ground without. Sprang I to the window and looked down. Was the ground about the double of a man's height below; yet was it not light there, as in the much-starred sky, and so perceived I naught. Yet I heard sound, as if of some one crawling off to the right in slow fashion. And now did Dave give one long yawn, and say as stretched he out upon his bed:

"In faith have I been looking for that same rogue these hours; and now that doth he know the weight of my right arm will I take my rest."

And in no time thereafter was honest Dave a-snoring. Had not Richard been awaked by all this, and did it now seem high time that I as well should be at my slumbers, as in truth were I some few moments after I had lain me down again. In the morn did my pupil burst forth in hearty laughter when had I told him how Dave in such quick fashion got rid of the intruder. Yet had not our honest serving man himself one word to say touching his doughty deed. When came we down into the common room to break our fast, did I note that our host looked at us in uneasy way from out the corners of his eyes. Then, as if I had no thought that he himself well knew of this same thing, I related to the publican how Dave had in speedy manner turned away our unbidden guest. Yet burst not forth the fellow in merriment, as many would have done. The rather did he wax loud with pretended wrath, and say:

"Know I the villain who hath dared again to make entrance to my house, at dead of night, with thought to rob the sleeping! Have I oft unto the justices made my complaints; and yet so intent are they each upon his own

affairs that hath this man not been apprehended. And doth he, by his wicked and unlawful comings to mine house, do hurt unto my trade. Oh, good sir, why didst thou not shoot him dead when was he within the window? God grant that some night I shall fall upon him when prowls he within my doors. Then will I have in truth justice on him by the taking of his life!" And when had he gone on in this way for some while longer, did he ask: "Dost thou and thy companions ride towards town of Bristol?"

"Why do you ask me this, my friend?" said I in turn.

"Only that I might tell thee much, sir, concerning the road that thou shouldst take," said he now in fawning way.

Whereat did I thank him for his offer, and harkened unto the man as he warned me which turnings of the way I should avoid. Was it fine morning, albeit somewhat over warm, when set we forth upon our second day of journeying. Had we gone on nigh to a league, when silent Dave caused his nag to quicken pace, and came he up beside me. Then said he naught, but did point his thumb o'er his right shoulder. As turned I round and looked back upon the road, I perceived two horsement riding at headlong speed in same direction as were we going. While gained they fast upon us, did I note that the twain were both ill-looking fellows. And when I beheld them place small masks upon their faces, had I no longer doubt that these were rogues who scoured the highways. Then I drew forth my two pistols and looked well to their primings. Next did I place one of these within the hand of honest Dave. Said he no word, but he gave me look that showed full plainly I might

depend on him to bring down one of these two fellows, if they should draw too nigh unto us. Pulled we in our reins, and turned to face the masked rogues. Then did I tell Richard to have no fear, but to hold himself behind his tutor and his faithful Dave. And pleased was I to perceive the lad showed no sign of terror, but in quiet way did as had I bidden him. Rode on they of the highway till they were nigh to pistol shot of us, when they reined in their foaming beasts, and seemed to speak with each other. Was it full plain they had not looked for us to put on such bold front. Did I deem it wise now to hold up my pistol, as if to look once more to the lock, and as well made Dave a show of his pistol. Were the rascals not now minded to put to the proof their valor, for turned they their horses's heads and rode back toward the Eastward.

"Have they no doubt gone," I said to my companions, "that they may assure the Black Boar's host that so far have we not missed the way."

At this did Richard laugh loudly; yet came there no smile upon the face of Dave, since no doubt he were wishing to have it seem that he had looked for this same speech of mine. Rode we on at good pace, and baited in the noon time at another inn where was the food of wretched kind. The host thereof was a pale man with shifty eyes, the glance of which I liked not. Was the afternoon most pleasant, and save that we strayed once some small distance from off the road, was there now naught to try us. Did Richard seem to find much to please him in the quiet scenes along the way. Came we that same even upon the White Horse Inn, where though the house were already nigh to full of guests, we were

yet given clean, soft beds, and as well the best of provinder. Was the host a short, stout man with a face that beamed with good health, and honesty as well.

The next day some little past the noon rode we into Bristol. With remembrance of the throngs of London, did I deem this a quiet place; yet was Richard much amazed at the number of the houses, and as well of the people whom he saw upon the streets. Looked I more than once around at Dave Thomas to learn if he were not much impressed by what he beheld. Wore he now his most important look, yet was there naught about him that would seem to show that he saw one thing which he deemed strange in smallest way. And yet had he ne'er afore looked even from the distance on one large town. Came we at last upon an inn that was like to serve our purpose. When had we our dinner did I set forth alone, and going down among the ships made I inquiries for one that would soon set sail for some port in the North of France. Found I at length one, by name the Greyhound, which had on board much merchandise that was to be carried to the port of Boulogne. Made I bargain with the master of this ship to take with him my pupil and myself and Dave, and as well our three beasts. Did he say he would set sail upon the morrow about the hour of noon. As I now looked out for the first time upon the sea was I much impressed by the wide-stretching sight.

Had we our three horses safe on board the Greyhound before the noon of the next day. And when the tide began to fall did the master, Jenks by name, give order for the spreading of the sails. As dropped we out into the arm of the great sea, and felt the ship swaying neath

our feet, did all seem to myself most strange. And as well my pupil marked how new in truth were the scene and motion. Yet did Dave Thomas look about him, as if were he well used to sailing on the seas, albeit he kept well his hand upon a railing of the bulwark, lest he should stagger with th emovings of the ship. As wore away the hours Richard complained of feelings of discomfort, and soon gave he way to pangs of illness from the tossing of the craft upon the long swells of the sea. Albeit were my stomach never over strong, yet did I escape this sickness. Turned our serving man most pale, and were I of firm belief that he suffered full as much as his young master. Yet did he cling bravely to his railing with look of much calmness, and strove to act as if he found pleasure in the salt air and the spray. Kept I well awake throughout the night, and cared for my pupil the while. Had not Dave Thomas now the power to do aught for any one, though might I in vain have strove to wring from him confession of his illness.

Went I upon the deck soon after break of day, and found that was the ship circled round with a thick wall of mist, beyond the which might naught be seen. Was Jenks, the master, steering now his ship, while wore he an anxious look, and seemed to listen with intent ears. Were my own ears ever most keen to receive low or distant sounds. And now did I note a strange noise that seemed to come from the direction in which was the ship's prow pointed. Perceiving that I as well as he were in keen way listening, the master asked of me:

"Dost thou hear aught that is strange?"

"Would I be sworn, my friend," made I reply, "that

we are nigh to dry land, for yonder," pointing to where the noise seemed to come from, "must there now be some wolf that growls in low but savage way."

Whereat did the master in loud voice cry out to his seamen, who obeyed his quick commands to trim the sails, while at some time he pushed hard upon his tiller, causing the prow to swing far round unto the right. And soon was heard more loudly the sound which to me seemed surely to be naught else than some wolf's growl. Yet came it not now from on ahead, but rather from well off to the left. Then with look of much relief turned Jenks, the master, to me, and said:

"Comes that sound, sir, from the deadly Wolf Rock, which lurks just at the surface of the sea. And though doth it ever growl out warnings of its presence, hath it taken many lives. Is it in faith a reef most dangerous of kind; and have I great dread of that same whene'er do I pass around Land's End."

Soon thereafter the mist began to rise, and could we see the land most plainly. Came the wind now more strong, and from out the Northeast. Hence did stand the ship over toward the coast of France. When were we, late in the day, beyond the sight of any land, I much wondered at the even roundness of the great horizon. And to my eyes looked most strange the masts of distant ships, of the hulls of which could I see naught, since were these down below our vision. Upon the morrow had Dick in full way recovered from his illness; and came he on deck in best of spirits, and pointed out some far-off masts that looked to him like great pegs. As well had Dave Thomas once more power to stand upon his feet. Yet so perverse was the man that he gave in no way an ex-

pression of the joy he surely must have felt at thought that had his sickness left him. Did we about the noon come in closer to the shores of France. With these in our full view, kept on the ship until the sun went down. Then in the early twilight did Jenks, the master, call to his seamen to drop the anchor and furl well the sails. Were we now just outside the town of Boulogne.

XXII.

CONSTANCE.

Scarce had we upon the morrow got upon the shore our beasts, together with the large saddle-bags which had Dave the care of, when were we beset by certain officers who served the great Henry, and as well the Duke of Sully. Did they ask many questions of us, or the rather of myself, since did they perceive that I alone might comprehend and make answer to their words. Told I to them who we were, and whence came we, and as well the purpose for which had we crossed the waters. Did they seem to be vexed with their doubts as to the truth of what I said, till had I in quiet way slipped into the palm of each a coin. Then did the bearing of these officers quick change, and found I myself of a sudden to be none less than "Milor Walter." And with much bowing and fine words they wished us a most pleasant journey. Did one of them express his wonder that I, who were in look and ways an Englishman, yet spoke the French tongue so well. But for all this I perceived that for want of use had my tongue lost some of that skill in way of French accent, which had I gained under the teaching of Don José. Did we not tarry long within the town, but set out upon the road which from Boulogne ran to the South. Was I full resolved that our journey should not end till came we nigh to where dwelt Constance Leigh.

Perceived I that the people of France were more meagre than they of my own country. Nor does this thing seem to be all from cause that they eat with more of heartiness, and of food of the more substance, in England than do their neighbors just across the waters. Are the French oftimes in easy way excited, and are they given much to waving arms and moving bout in brisk fashion, and as well to shrugging much their shoulders. In truth hath not flesh such good chance for clinging to the bones of they, as doth it have with calm and more sluggish Britons. Whenever lay our way through some small village, would there come from out the houses people, whose dress and ways seemed strange to myself, and as well my pupil. And yet we no doubt looked full as strange unto them; for would they gaze long after us with wide-opened eyes, and speaking one to another in low, quick tones. And did I note that were Richard Peasley and his tutor cause for no such wonder, as was Dave Thomas, who rode with his important look upon his face, yet paying naught of heed either unto the people or the sights. Were the inns whereat we paused for the most part neat and well kept. Would the hosts bow low; and rubbing much their hands, and with many writhes of body, sounded they the praises of their own wines and dishes.

On the second even of our journey from Boulogne, when had we supped well, did I go out to our host, who sat on the porch of the inn and I asked of him if the chateau of the Count de Brecy were far off.

"Nay, good Milor," made he reply, "right sad am I to tell your worship that I do know naught of this Count whom thou dost pay honor to in thus asking where he dwells."

The same question put I the next night at the Sign of the Harp, whose host, busy though he were with a dozen other guests, thought for full a moment and then said with look of pain that could he not tell me this thing. Yet the even thereafter when were we at the Ship Inn, and I asked of our host touching the chateau of the Count de Bercy, the man exclaimed:

"Didst thou not see, Milor, when thou passed betwixt the two high hills not half a league back upon the road, up above thee to the right a stone building with——"

"In truth I did," made I now interruption, "and in that same chateau doth dwell——?"

"The Count de Brecy with his sister and his niece."

"Then at this same Ship Inn," thought I, "are we like to tarry for some few weeks to come."

On the morrow sent I forth my pupil Dick to ramble for his health's sake, while set Dave about the task of putting in convenient places the things that had he brought in the two saddle-bags. And from this labor were he free to turn himself to grooming our two horses and his nag as well. When had I dressed myself anew and with much care, walked I to Eastward for nigh half a league; and there having paused, gazed I upward to the stone chateau, where dwelt Constance Leigh. Strove I now to fancy how she would appear this day, when were she full thirteen years of age.

Now, strange to relate, though I had long while cherished much the wish that I might come to the chateau of the de Brecys, yet when was the same before me on the hill-top, did I long tarry by the side of the broad road that led toward Boulogne. And while stood I thus was there within me a sense of much uneasiness. At length

so high had climbed the sun within the heavens that I deemed it within an hour of noon. Then came to me the thought that it were not fitting that I should go up to the chateau, unbidden, at the hour of dinner. So did I walk some little way down the road, and there rest me on a soft bank, nigh to a spring of cool and sparkling water. Had I now little wish for food, albeit was my thirst grown strong; and this did I well slake. Was the sun full two hours on its descent into the West, when at last came I to the steps of the chateau. And beheld I there, at frolic with a young greyhound, a most winsome maid of tall and supple form, with bright and merry hazel eyes, above soft, full cream-like cheeks, and beneath great waves of curling brown hair. When she perceived myself did she look shyly at me; and then turned she and seized by its collar the young dog, which now showed its teeth, and growled as if had it wish to be at me. Albeit I knew full well this were Constance, for had she yet some of the look of eight years gone by, had she no thought that there did pass in slow way up the steps an old and true friend of hers. Yet had I looked to see her there that day, whereas had she no thought of my coming. Upon the topmost step I paused and taking from off head my hat, I said:

"Dost thou not know me, Constance?"

Looked she at myself in puzzled way for full a moment, and then did there seem to come up from her old memories those of Clayton Hall. And sparkled much her lovely eyes with pleasure, as she exclaimed:

"As do I live, art thou my old friend, Walter!"

Now did she push from her the greyhound, and come quickly to me, holding out her small, smooth hand, the which I took in gentle way, and bending o'er it pressed I

my lips thereon. Then while I stood, yet with bowed head, gazing in way of admiration on the maid, came there into her white cheeks a blush, albeit were there in her eyes a bright gleam of pleasure. Next did she say:

"And though thou wert but boy when was I in England, art thou now full a man. And have I not much grown since the days when thou didst come to me at Clayton Hall?"

Did it delight her much when I declared that she had grown in way that were in truth cause for much of wonder.

"And once sent I to thee message," said I now. "Was the bearer the good Count de Noye, whom I saw at Bidwell, when dwelt I with my guardian."

"And brought he that same unto myself," said she again with blush, "and I gave to him a kiss for that he had so done. But tell me what brings thee here in France?" When had I told to her the cause of this same, I perceived upon her soft brow one small frown. Then went she on thus: "Art thou come to be a tutor? Thought I that thy dear sire, whom they did say was dead, had large estate. And was he not by title what they call a Knight?"

"Was he Knight, dear Constance, and was he called Sir Philip, albeit was there then, as is there still, much of debt upon our good estates of Merton. And though am I for the present tutor, am I none the less an English Knight. And couldst thou in truth call me Sir Walter."

Then I related to her how had I gone to the Court of Elizabeth to save my old tutor, and had there received honor of knighthood. Did she listen unto me with wide open eyes; and when had I told her all of those things that

I deemed like to be of interest to her, led she the way into the wide hall of the chateau, at the end of which perceived I a lady, who had much of the look of Constance. Was this in truth her mother, who was standing by a cabinet. Within the opened door of this were certain handsome plates of silver, the which did she examine, no doubt as to their cleanliness. When had her daughter presented me, did the Lady Leigh greet me in pleasant fashion. Then told I her of Don José, whom had I saved from the scaffold, and who had himself preserved her whole family upon the Eve of St. Bartholomew. Did there cross her face a look, as if had come up within her mind memories of the awful time of which had I thus given to her reminder. Then she asked with much of interest touching Don José. And when had I told her of his death at the home of his old comrade, did she sigh, though not in way of much sadness, as no doubt she deemed it better for this old wanderer that he had gone unto his home. Then Constance asked of her mother if she should take me unto her uncle in his library. Was there for an instant a look of doubt upon the yet comely face of the Lady Leigh; and then did that same disappear, as said she:

"Would my brother no doubt be glad to welcome Sir Walter, and as well to hear from him of our friend who succored us in the time of pressing need."

When had fair Constance led me into the library, perceived I seated with a book in hand a gentleman of a pale face with black hair, and beard which was trimmed in careful manner. Do I remember well the cold glance of his small dark eyes, which had a scheming and suspicious look. Was this the Count de Brecy, albeit did he bear

most small resemblance to his sister, who like unto her daughter was of a frank and open face. When had my sweet young guide said to her uncle that I was her old friend, Walter Wynnington, who had since become Knight, and who had been well known unto Don José de Madura, did the Count relax his face into a chill smile, and say he were pleased to see me, and to hear of one who had in the past done his family some service. Then told I him of the later years and death of Don José, and when had I come to end of this, he said:

"'Tis well he hath thus passed away, for had he small pleasure in life. For the aid he once gave our family were we willing to show him all gratitude that might be in reason. Did he have perhaps more than passing fondness for a sister of mine, who died some years ago. Yet would not a union of the twain have been at all in reason. And after had he perceived this truth, was Don José not content to accept our hospitality, which might have been freely his. And didst thou learn thy French of him?"

"Did he teach to me, sir, not only French, but the Spanish tongue as well," made I reply. "And he likewise gave to me many lessons in the art of fencing."

"So, so, my young friend, later may I give thee chance to show how much he taught thee of this same art. But what is it that hath brought thee into the domains of the great Henry?" When had I told the Count I were here as tutor of a young gentleman, son of a rich English Squire, did he give one slight shrug of his thin shoulder, and then turning quickly to Constance, he said: "Go, my child, unto thy mother. Will thy guest in short time be again with thee."

As soon as had Constance left the room, the Count

much questioned me touching the condition of my estates. And when had I made, as best I could, answer to him, he shook his head, and did say that 'twas his belief the leeches, who by grace of the Law Courts had fastened upon Merton, would ne'er in my day relax their grasp. Then asked he of myself if I were minded then to try the foils with him; and to this gave I consent in ready fashion. Led he the way from his library, which was in truth well fitted and adorned, into a smaller room which was for the most part bare. Was there here a suit of old armor, which I gazed upon and weighed with much of interest. Were there as well swords, both old and new, and full half a dozen foils. When had I lain aside my own sword, did I select a foil, as had already done my host. Had we exchanged not many strokes ere I perceived that at this thing I were master of the Count. Did I at first deem it wise to make concealment of my skill, and permit him to come off the victor. Not only had I for him some of respect for reason of his years, but as well had I the wish to gain his favor, since was he uncle to fair Constance. And so it was that the Count began to wear a pitying look for me, his rival, whom had he begun to push in way of much vigor. Then came to me thought that he had to my mind failed of paying just honor to the memory of his preserver, Don José. And could I not now refrain from doing justice to the old man's teachings, by the use of a certain thrust which had he taught me. Then did I await my chance, the which I quickly seized, and sent his foil flying from the hand of the astonished Count. Had he look of much vexation, as picked he his foil from off the floor. Then, trying it well with his hands, and looking o'er the handle in close manner, as if in hope of

finding there some weak point upon the which to put the blame, he smiled in his cold fashion, and said:

"Hast thou had a great stroke of luck, Sir Walter. Yet will we see if chance will again come in such quick way to give to thee a seeming victory."

Then crossed we again our foils, and seemed he to have the wish to try some of his own tricks. These did I in easy way set at naught, till had he made use of all such as were at his command. And then I tried another pass that Don José had shown me, and by which sent I again the foil from out the Count's hand. Was his blood now well up, and when we next made trial of our skill went he at myself with much of fury, thinking no doubt that I might not parry his more rapid thrusts. Yet did I this thing till were he grown weary. Then once more went I at him, and with a few strokes had him at my mercy. Now perceived he that he might not hope to o'ercome me at the foils, and made he acknowledgment that I were victor. Whereat did I strive to soften his defeat by saying:

"In truth, sir, am I by reason of my youth far more quick upon my feet and with my wrist than art thou."

Did he nod his head, as if to say that had he ascribed my victories to naught else save the reasons I had named. Then said he, as I girded on again my own sword:

"Would I no longer, Sir Walter, rob my niece of the pleasure of entertaining thee."

Was I not minded to quarrel with the Count de Brecy for that he dismissed me from his presence. And when had I come to Constance, she took me out into her gardens, where grew there many flowers of divers kinds. Told she me of each sort, and did I listen to her, albeit not

heeding what she said, since were I so lost in admiration of herself. Likewise she caused me to smell of each kind, and then asked which one was most pleasing unto me. Before I made my answer I asked her to name that one, the perfume of which had most charmed her. Did she honor with her choice a certain flower, the which I now strive vainly to recall. Then said I:

"Do we in truth agree upon this same flower. For is the perfume of it passing sweet."

Next asked she of me which flower I most valued for its beauty. Again did I first question her touching her choice in this matter. And when had she named her favorite, I set seal of my approval upon the self same flower. Then plucked she for me a nosegay made up of these sweetest and fairest of her flowers. Did I receive the same with much show of thanks, and then kissed I the gift in tender way. When had we returned to the chateau, she told me of the lessons which had she from her mother, and of her embroideries, in which seemed she to take much of pleasure. When at length drew nigh the hour for supper, and I had seen not again either the Lady Leigh or the Count de Brecy, I took my leave of the sweet maid, kissing her hand in gallant fashion. Then did she, as I left her, bid me in hesitating way, to come again some time to see her mother and her uncle.

When had I come back to the hostel, I put the precious nosegay into water to end that I might preserve it the longer. Was there upon the face of Dick at our supper a better look than had I seen there in long while. And gained he health daily from his walks and rides, in some of which I bore him company, striving ever at such times to gain distant glimpses of the stone chateau. Meanwhile

did Dave give some of his time to study of the French tongue, his tutor being Joan, a fair maid of the Ship Inn. Would he in parrot way, and with most important look, speak nigh to three score of words which had some small resemblance to the French, and were as well all nouns and verbs. Yet might it not have pleased the man to have beheld Joan, when behind his back would she imitate the motion of his lips, and as well his manner.

On the fourth day after my visit to Constance, did I again climb the hill and come unto the stone chateau of the cold de Brecy. Received I most kindly greeting from young Mistress Leigh, who again took me through her gardens and plucked for me another nosegay of our favored flowers, which received I in tender way and held with left hand close to my breast. When had we come into the wide hall I perceived the Lady Leigh, who gave me a word of greeting and a kindly look, albeit I noted then about her manner somewhat of constraint. Soon did she withdraw; and then Constance showed to myself some of her embroideries. And when had I praised these, she talked much about laces, velvets, and feathers, and such like things, for the which had I never much of liking. Would she ask of me if I liked this style of gown, or cloak, and that fashion of headdress. For the nonce made I great show of interest in such things. And had I no thought to dispute with her as to the things which she favored most. Came not in to us again her mother, nor caught I glimpse of the Count de Brecy. When took I my leave went Constance with me unto the door, yet were I not by her bidden to come again to the chateau. At parting pressed I my lips in gallant way upon her hand: and as I moved down the steps did I turn in sudden way

and glance backward. Then beheld I Constance with her own lips pressed upon her hand where had I just kissed the same. And she perceiving that I had in this act caught her, blushed deeply and dropped her hand. Yet smiled she upon me most sweetly as waved I to her a last salute. As walked I back with light step unto the hostel, I said within myself that my love for the fair child had grown into a strong love for the budding maid, and in its turn would ripen into the deeper love for the glorious woman.

Though upon the morrow I found much of joy in cherishing the last precious nosegay that had I received from hands of Constance, yet did I well weigh the truth that had her mother made show of some constraint when had she spoken to me. And now came thought that the Count de Brecy were not minded to have me again visit at his chateau. Might he have spoken his mind touching this matter to his sister, who in turn had told her daughter that she might not bid me come again. For full a week had I waited, longing to see Constance and yet deeming it wise not to go yet unto the chateau. Then I found that in this matter I had no longer power to keep myself within subjection. And so set I forth in hope of once more seeing and having speech with Constance. When came I to the door of the chateau, rushed there at me a large black dog that made as if to bite me; but when I gave the brute sharp look, and raised my foot as if to kick, did he sneak away. Knocked I three times ere was the door opened to me by a tall, thin serving man, whom had I seen last time I came there. Lurked there a smile about the corners of his mouth as he said:

"Was I bid to say to thee, Sir Walter, if thou shouldst

come this day, that is my Lady caring for young Mistress Constance, who hath been ill these two days."

Having said this in a soft tone, did he quickly, yet in gentle fashion, close the door upon me. As moved I with unhappy thoughts adown the hill, I chanced to turn my head and look up at the stone walls of the chateau. Then my eye caught the flutter of a kerchief from an upper window. Could this thing be done by no one save Constance; and so I made acknowledgment by kissing both my hands, and waving these so long as I perceived the moving kehchief. And every day thereafter, while tarried we at the Ship Inn, came I down the road at the self same hour, and stood where might I look up at the walls which held Constance. And there saw I each time the faint flutter of her herchief, while would I wave my hat and waft toward her kisses from my fingers, albeit I did fear she were too far off to perceive these.

When were come the time to make departure for his home with Richard, now browned and hardy from his many small journeys, were I loathe to give up this daily sight of that far-off kerchief, as it waved for me. Yet since it were my duty, I set day for our going. Went we not forth from our hostel in the morn, for did I find pretext for delay till had come the hour when were I wont to make exchange of distant greetings with the maid I loved. And when rode we past the hill on which the chateau stood, I drew in my rein and fell behind Dave Thomas. Then when fluttered the small strip of white, made I reply with more than wonted vigor, knowing that would she perceive 'twere meant in truth for my farewell. And remained my thoughts with her all that day, and for many days thereafter.

XXIII.

ANOTHER JOURNEY.

Of our safe journey back to Boulogne, and thence by ship across the calm sea unto the port of Bristol, have I now but small remembrance, since were my thoughts so much intent upon one tender matter that had I no time to note the scenes along the way. Yet when our horses bore us at easy pace along the pleasant roads of Wiltshire, with Perling Manor not many leagues away, was I minded that Dave had lost a fair tutor, whom he no doubt did greatly miss. So reined I in my horse and waited for his coming up, when I said:

"Was it sad that thou didst lose her who was teaching to thee the language of the French. So would it please me much at odd times to take up with thee thy lessons in that same tongue, where Joan left off."

"I do thank thee for thy kindness, Sir Walter," made he reply, "yet have I already French sufficient for my needs."

And in this he spoke truth; for I thereafter learned that whene'er went he in spruce attire among the merry English maids who were to his liking, were he wont with his important look to utter his two score and one dozen French words. And was it the more to their delight that they did comprehend naught of which gave he utterance

to. Have I in truth been told that by this same accomplishment of his Dave won many hearts.

"As I do live," exclaimed Squire Peasley, when he beheld his Richard coming with the glow of health upon his cheek, "is my son much better in his look than e'er before! Is it wonderful—amazing! Must there be some good magic in the air of France! And yet, Walter, art thou grown thin and pale from thy sojourn in that same land. Is this thing as well most wonderful!"

Made I no strife thereafter to put knowledge into Dick's head at cost of good health. Yet did he none the less make what, for him, deemed I good progress. And went on life with us in smooth and even way for two years and full six months more. Then Richard made complaint that were he troubled much by pains within his eyes. So did his sire give him firm command to open not a book for one whole month. And yet had my pupil no relief from his pains of eye. Went his tutor, with consent of Squire Peasley, to the house of Doctor Grumby and told him of Dick's new ailment. Did he at first say in gruff tone that I had kept the lad too much at his books, and that had he now need but to keep his eyes from off such. Yet when I told him that my pupil had a month gone by given up books without improvement, the physician knit his brow, and then said that he would ride with me to Perling Manor.

When had he much questioned Richard, and looked well into his aching eyes, he said that might there be fear of blindness, if were not in speedy way applied the knife of some skilled surgeon. Had he not wish to make attempt of this with his own hand, but did he deem it well that Richard should be taken unto a certain Doctor Dundas,

who dwelt nigh to London city, upon the Oxford road. And would this same surgeon be able to use his knife in most skillful fashion. Did the Squire, and his Dame as well, say there was naught to do but to send their son at once in my care unto this same Doctor Dundas. Gave the physician to myself direction as to how should my pupil's eyes be bandaged, as protection from the cold. As well he left some washes to be used while on the road, and likewise a letter which wrote he and gave to me, saying I should deliver it into the hands of Doctor Dundas. Did we at once set about our preparations for the journey.

This time had we not for serving man Dave Thomas, since he the year before took to wife a widow, who brought to him nine hundred guineas, with the which had he set up in Berkshire a hostel; and by this same he thrived for many years. The man whom sent the Squire with us was a thin-faced and smooth-tongued young rascal by name of Mark. Bore he himself unto his youthful master and myself in most cringing way, and ready was he ever to accept of small trifles. And would such oft get into his hands without our having made him gift of them. So, when it chanced that one of us did miss that for which we stood in need, would we make mention of the thing to Mark, who would at once go in search of it. And when had he found this, would he bring it to its owner with most servile bows and words. As were we about to set forth well-wrapped one morn late in the month of February, I perceived riding up the avenue my guardian, Sir Francis. When had he come in before a fire, and having removed his cloak and refreshed himself with one good glass of light wine, did he smile upon myself with most beaming face, and say:

"My dear boy, Walter, have I much pleasure in telling thee that art thou like to have Merton, free of cumbrance, and in thine own hands, within a six month."

In rendering to him my thanks for these joyful tidings I made it plain how truly glad I were at thought that 'twould then be within my power to pay back the sums, which in his kindness had he placed within my needy hands. And came there as well to me the thought that with a knowledge of my means, might the Count de Brecy look in way of more favor upon Sir Walter Wynnington of Merton Hall. Then Sir Francis said:

"Do I know well a certain high and mighty Judge of the Queen's Bench, who hath given promise to attend unto thy matter. Will he not forget to do this same, for doth he look to me for a certain service. And have I made it known to him that I shall render him that he desires just so soon as shall he do thee this good turn which doth lie within his power."

In answer to my questions touching his family, he said that the Lady Wynnington were in good health, and that spoke she of myself with more and more of respect, and kindly feeling. And when had I given expression of my pleasure at knowledge of this, went on my guardian to say that his Walter was happy in the hope of marrying Maud de Wycherly within a year. Yet were this fair spinster given to the trial of her suitor's feelings at times by casting glances of much archness upon others than himself. Was the Lady Wynnington well pleased to have for her son's wife the daughter of a Baron who held high his head, albeit did it in some way cause her grief to perceive that he whom had she ever doted on, gave now no thought but unto another. Sir Francis told me that he

were now on his way to Bristol town upon a matter of his own, which needed much his looking to. When had I wished him well in this business, found I that Squire Peasley and his Dame had took leave of their Richard, who with Mark and our horses were already awaiting me without. So said I farewell to Sir Thomas in grateful way, and left him in the Squire's company. As rode I forth from Perling, with Dick by my side and Mark following us, did I fancy Squire Peasley, with opened mouth and eyes of wonder, hearing from Sir Francis that he who had dwelt some years within his household as tutor to his son, were like soon to be master of his own estates and set up as gentleman.

As our better road lay through Berkshire I contrived that we should lie the second night upon our journey at the hostel of Dave Thomas. Was it past the nightfall when came we upon the shining lights of his Myrtle Inn. Then leaped I from off my horse, and helped Richard to the ground, while came a man from out the stable to aid Mark with the saddle-bags and horses. As led I my pupil by the arm, and entered in the door, I perceived Dave Thomas seated in the common room. Around him were full a dozen of the folk from a nigh hamlet, who gazed at him in wonder as did he with his important look repeat unto them his few and broken words of French. Though our coming thus gave to him naught of surprise, yet set he about to make our stay at his inn a pleasant one. Was the wife, who had brought to him the guineas by the which had he set up as publican, a comely woman who took much of pride in her husband, and oft looked at him with loving eyes. Yet showed he not for her the same fondness; and in truth when glanced he on her was there

in his face a look that bespoke his wish to chide her for the doing of this or the not doing of that. Did he look at Mark in sharp way, when came into the room our man; and when were he gone Dave spoke of the time when he himself were with us upon our travels. And with a sigh he said:

"Fear I, Sir Walter, that this Mark of thine doth at times sadly put thee out by his clumsy way and uncouth manners."

Upon the morrow set we forth again. As might not Richard make use of his well-bandaged eyes upon the road, I for the most part led for him his horse. Did the weather stay most fair and mild for that season; and thus it was we came, full a day sooner than had we looked for, unto the house of the skilled Doctor Dundas. When the surgeon, who was a lean, sharp-featured man, with small but searching eyes, had read to end the letter which was writ to him by Doctor Grumby, his face wore smiling look, and he said:

"Hope I for much of pleasure from this case my friend hath sent me. Shall young Richard Peasley have home with me till sets he out again for home with well eyes."

Was I much pleased to have the Doctor take on himself the whole charge of this my pupil, since might I have vainly been at much pains to find for him lodgings well suited to his needs. Did I find for myself and Mark such entertainment as stood we in need of at the Leopard Inn. Went Mark daily to attend upon his young master; and as well did I go the first two days to the house of Doctor Dundas to find out how thrived my Richard. Yet seemed not the surgeon pleased at my coming thus, since he no doubt was of belief that I were minded to advise with

him touching the care of my charge, for which thing he had no wish. And when on my second visit I withdrew, he said to me:

"Thou needst not, Sir Walter, give unto thyself the pother of coming every day to my house, for will I each even send to thee by the serving man word as to how hath been the young master that same day. And in truth is it far better for the lad to be alone."

Gave I the surgeon my assurance that his wishes in this matter should have my respect. And so each even, when came back Mark to the Leopard, I would ask of him how did his master, and what had he said. Gave to me Mark, with but little help of questions, a full account of all which that day had he seen and heard. And was I pleased to learn that was my pupil doing well in the hands of his skilled surgeon. One day as set forth Mark to go to his master, came into my head the thought that he might be taken with a sudden fondness for certain things of small value, which should he see at the house of Doctor Dundas. Then would he from habit be like to lay hands upon the same. So in a pleasant tone, said I to him:

"In truth, Mark, art thou good, honest servant; and doth thy master think well of thee. Now, if thou shouldst find in the house of the good Doctor any small trifle, of sort to place in pocket with ease and convenience, do thou name the thing to me, and when go I in to London the first day, mayhap I shall find its mate within some shop. Then will I make purchase of the same for thyself."

Whereat the man grew somewhat pale, and then he said in cringing tone that I were very kind to him, and if he perceived some such thing should he name it to me, and would he forever value highly that same present. Did I

now suspect that he had made off already with some such article, the which I doubted not he took back and left within its proper place. Nor put he to proof my offer, for named he no thing that had caught his fancy while in the surgeon's house. When had I no cause to worry for Richard, whose eyes improved in steady way, began the days with me to draw heavily along. Then had I resort to London as aid in passing time. In the visits that I made to that great town saw I many things which no doubt I would now deem fit to write down here, were it not that the memory of one, whom there I knew by chance, doth in my mind make worthy of the mention naught save what did appertain unto that person.

One day about the hour of noon, when wandered I along the streets not far off from Blackfriars, and watched in idle way the sights, I noted going before me a strong-built man, who might have been some skilled artisan upon a holiday. Bore he in his arms a child, which I deemed to be about the age of two years; and by his side walked a thin woman of red and shrewish visage, who might have been no one save his own wife. Were she dressed in a gown of bright hues, and wore a cloak of same fashion. Of a sudden did the child burst forth into loud cries, and kick much its feet, and clutch its little hands. Then exclaimed the woman in tone of much vexation:

"Tom, dost thou not perceive our little love to be in state of much worry? And yet thou walkest on as if there happened naught to claim thy wandering thoughts! Thou great stupid thing, canst thou not soothe our Harry?"

Yet was small Harry not then minded to be soothed, since did he scream and kick the more for every one of his fond father's gentle words. Then the woman caught

by his sleeve poor Tom, causing him to pause. From out his arms she next took the squalling child, and much dancing this, she cried out to the man, who stood gazing at her in perplexed way:

"Dost thou not see our angel is crying for somew'at which it doth crave? Think, thou dolt, what may it be the dear child so much wishes!"

And now lost I of a sudden all sight and thought of the twain and their screaming babe. For across the way did I by chance perceive a gentleman of a pleasing face and mien, who was gazing most intently upon the scene which before had caught my eye. Did I deem him to be nigh to forty years of age, and was he dressed like one of some substance. About the man was that which could I not name, yet which did in strange way attract me. Was there around his mouth an odd smile, which bespoke the truth that while he were not minded to blame either the scolding woman, or the man who took so readily her unjust words, yet was he amused in most keen way by this small show of nature. Was his face in truth that of one who was given much to observing closely all that might excite his interest. Did I there and at once name, to myself this one as no mortal of the common sort. When had his interest in them seemed somewhat to flag, were the twain moving on with child much quieted. Then did this pleasing person in one quick glance seem to perceive that I were watching him in nigh to as intent a way as he himself had looked upon the others. Then turned he, and with easy, graceful step walked up the street, and at a nigh corner disappeared.

XXIV.

WILL SHAKESPEARE.

THOUGHT I much that day of the gentleman I had seen nigh to Blackfriars. And the same night did I in my dreams come upon him again, albeit were there now much of strangeness in his look and action. The next day went I once more into London, and wandered much about, looking into the faces of they whom perceived I approaching from the distance, in the vain hope that I might see the features of him who had so impressed me. As went I back unto the Leopard, I said to myself:

"Might I walk London's streets a month without chancing once again upon him. In truth how know I that he be yet in the great town?"

The noon-time of the day thereafter found me again in London's streets, and while were I looking at this and that thing, I came upon a tavern, the sign of which I perceived to be a swan. Then did I remember to have heard it said that poets, and as well players, were wont to meet each other at the Swan Tavern. Since had I wish to see with my own eyes what such were like, and I were minded at same time to refresh myself, went I in the place. And as I glanced around, did I behold at a far table my gentleman, with full half a score of others seated and standing round about him. Were he no doubt making now for his listeners some jests, for would they all burst forth into

loud laughter. Took I a seat and called for ale. Of the waiting-man who brought to me the same, I asked:

"Who may be the one yonder, who by his pleasant words doth seem so much to entertain the others?"

"What, good Master," made this man reply, with look of much wonder on his face, "dost thou not know Will Shakespeare of the company of the Globe, who writes for them their plays. Do I like him for naught else than that he be kind and gentle to they of my condition. Know I not of my own self whether he writes ill or good." Here did he lower much his voice: "Have I heard Ben Jonson yonder," nodding toward a gentleman seated at another table, and not far off from myself, "say his plays have many faults."

Gave I the man a shilling for that he had told me these things. Was I well pleased to find that the one who had so impressed me were the poet, as well as player, of whom had I heard. As well had I memory of hearing more than one speak of Ben Jonson as a poet of some promise. As sipped I my cup of ale, would I look at Jonson, while were I resting my two eyes from gazing upon Shakespeare. Did the younger poet seem to be nigh to thirty years of age, and had he look of one to whose clear mind were given vantage of much learning. Yet withal was there about his face a sour and a crabbed look. More than once I saw him turn an envious glance toward the elder poet, seated as he were with admiring eyes and ears on every side. Presently came a gentleman with gray hair and with a most proud mien, and taking seat nigh to Jonson, he made motion of his head toward Shakespeare, and did say:

"Is Master Will most nimble with his tongue, the which in faith hath the rare power to lay ready hold on wit."

"As to his wit, Sir John," said Jonson with a look of some vexation, "is he ready enough; but dost thou not mark the many faults which are in his writing. Doth he oft blunder when his parts of speech he puts together. And hath he in most reckless way make coinage of countless words that I had never seen or heard afore. As well hath he had small learning—a smatter of the Latin, and much less of Greek——"

"Yet, Jonson," put in the other, "is there not about his lines a strange, smooth sweetness?"

"True, Sir John," replied Ben Jonson, again with envy in his look, "there is that about his verse."

"And doth he not show a deep knowledge of mankind, the which might he gain only by constant study of the subject?"

"I grant you that, Sir John."

"And is not Will Shakespeare right down good fellow?"

"Am I second to no man, Sir John, in friendly feelings toward our Will, albeit do I at times find his rare o'erflow of spirits hard to repress."

"Ben Jonson, like I the man, and his grand poetry as well. Yet have I thought it strange he seeks ever to get patent of gentility—aspires to become a country gentleman, when is his family, as have I been told, of common sort."

"You speak truth, Sir John; and is he ever seeking money, which doth he save with end to one day becoming country gentleman. Am I told that he lends out money at interest."

Then was Jonson minded that he had business else-

where at that hour with a certain man, and did he leave the Swan. A moment later went also from the place the proud Sir John; whate'er might be his name of family have I never learned. And presently did I note that Shakespeare had arisen to his feet, and was making toward the door. As walked he on his glance fell upon me, and then with a most pleasant smile turned he aside and came to where I sat. In a manner that was gentle, and a tone that did attract, he said:

"I saw thee, friend, two days gone by, when we did view the vixen as she visited the child's small sins upon the father's head. Doth it amuse me much to watch these same unreasoning ways of foolish mortals. And am I full sure that thou thyself hast eye for that same thing."

Had I now arisen to my feet, and in stammering way I assured the poet that I were grateful to him for that had he noticed me; and I begged of him that he would honor me yet further by having with me a glass of wine. Gave he to this in smiling fashion his consent. Then while we waited for the wine to be brought to us, had he from myself who I was, and what had brought me to London, and as well the truth that did I expect within a half year to have in my possession the estates of Merton, free of cumbrance. Then he said:

"Art thou, Sir Walter, to be envied much. Wilt thou be Knight and country gentleman as well. Like unto that is there no life on earth. To be the same hath ever been my strife and strong desire. And will the thing be brought to pass within a few short years."

Then he gazed upon the wall, as if he in fancy already saw himself as fain would he be. When had come the wine and we did sip the same, asked I of Shakespeare if

liked he not the bustle of the busy world, amid the which had he so long moved. With shake of head made he reply:

"Oftimes am I most lonely in the throngs, and sigh for company of woods and fields."

"But, sir," I urged, "is it not most pleasing unto thee to have thy verses much applauded by admiring crowds?"

Was there upon his face a weary look, as he replied:

"Would I have quiet where the Avon flows."

Then sighed he deeply, and asked of me if I were minded to remain longer at the Swan. I assured him that if he were now about to leave the place, it would for me have small attraction. Whereat he smiled and said that were he himself in humor for a walk, and that I were free to bear him company. Did I render thanks for what I deemed his kindly offer. And set we forth at once, passing along the busy streets, where my poet with his deep glance observed the face of many of they whom we passed. And of some, when had we got beyond them, would he make comment, sometimes in serious way, and again in fashion that would arouse my mirth. At length did he pause before a certain house, and ask of me if I would know the place again. When had I assured him that I should hold that house well within my memory, he shook me gently by the hand, and said:

"Here now impatient waits my Muse for me. Shalt thou be welcome any day it is thy wish to come. Fare-the-well, Sir Walter."

Whereat, without a further word, did he enter in his door and close the same after him. Went I back unto the Leopard pondering much upon the man, and thinking of my rare good fortune in chancing thus upon him. On the morrow came to me a message from Doctor Dundas, say-

ing he had wish to see me. When had I come to the surgeon's house, found I my pupil Richard, with his eyes once more sound and well. Gave he to myself a long account of how had the knives been with skill applied, and how had thereafter his trouble slowly passed away. Came in unto us, with look of much pleasure, good Doctor Dundas; and though he made pretence of speaking in modest way of what had he done for Richard, yet did I perceive that he were at heart full proud of this same thing. Did he say that the young heir of Perling would be fit to start for home upon the morrow next but one. When in the morn Mark were about to wait upon his master, did I bid him to get that even all things in readiness for our departure; and said I as well that I would pass that night myself in London. For was I minded not alone to see Will Shakespeare at his lodging, but as well to make visit to the Globe Theatre, where was to be played his tragedy of Richard the Third.

When had I come within the town the same day, I kept my eye well open for some convenient hostel. And found I one to my liking not far from Blackfriars. Here I bespoke a bed for the night, and as well took now my dinner. Then went I to the Swan; but after had I entered in, did not the place have attraction for me such as on the day before, since now saw I there no Shakespeare. Did I perceive Ben Jonson at a far table, busied with some letters. Leaving the place I made my way unto the lodgings of my poet, at the door of which I knocked. Was I admitted by a neat maid-servant, who when had I told her I had come with his permission to see Master Shakespeare, did she direct me to ascend the staircase, and then to knock upon the door of first right hand room. Did I as she had

bid me, and in answer to my summons heard I the gentle voice of Shakespeare bidding me to enter. Opened I the door and went in a large, pleasant room, where beheld I the poet at a table, and in act of writing. Craved I his pardon for that I had thus made interruption of his work; but he gave to me direction to take seat, since would he within a few moments be at my service. As had he directed me, so did I; and looking about the room perceived I another door that was part way ajar, showing the curtains of his bed. I noted that there were about the room but few books. Went on the poet now to write, which thing did he in swift manner, stopping not to scratch out and replace this word or that, as have I oft done in this small history. Of a sudden he paused, and perceived I a look of some vexation on his face. Then did he start as if to write again; yet set he down no word, but the next moment threw down his pen. Now with a laugh, he said:

"Hath that shy one, my Muse, just fled from me." Then looking upward into the empty air, went he on: "Why wilt thou be so coy? 'Tis but my friend, Sir Walter Wynnington, who would well please a wiser maid." Then turning unto myself: "Should there another woman come in here, the which do God forbid, there might be cause for her to fly, as if in jealous huff. And yet in turn the jade will tyrant be. When are my nerves on edge, 'tis then the time she hath me by the nose and leads me to my table, where she says: 'Will we in sooth grind out some verses now.'"

Did I beg of him that I should be given his permission now to leave, so that he might have back his Muse. But would he not permit of this, saying that he were now

minded to rest from his writing for a while, and as well to refresh himself by entertaining me. Then went he to a cupboard, from which he brought a flask of white wine with two glasses. Was this wine most pleasant to the taste, and when seemed it to mount unto the head, did it this thing in right gentle way. And now began my poet to talk in rapid fashion, but yet with much of smoothness, throwing out many witty things, the which will I not now repeat, since were they so like in kind to those I found within the printed pages of his writings. Of this book have I one copy, well-worn from many readings. And would I say now that am I ill-pleased with the portrait of its great writer which it doth contain, though did Ben Jonson, in his introduction, hold it up to praise. Hath it not one trace of that attractive look, which had in life my poet's face. In truth might they as well have named that portrait as the likeness of the monkey, for which did Jessica exchange old Shylock's much loved jewel. While was my gentle host in this his genial way giving to me entertainment, was there knock upon the door; and being so bidden came in a small man of shabby dress, and with a face that bespoke much of worriment. Bowed he in cringing way to the poet, and then said:

"Do I trust, good Master Shakespeare, that thou wilt not bear hard upon my brother James, who must pay to thee an hundred and twenty guineas, fourteen shillings and sixpence, being the monies thou didst loan to him with the interest thereon. Will the sum be due three days from now. And will James be much put out to raise the same. In truth may he not have it at the time appointed. Have I not the sum myself, else would he get it from me, so that thou shouldst be paid at proper time."

"Mark me, Hollis," did Shakespeare make reply, "have I no wish to bear hard upon thy brother James, or yet on any man. Had he the money of me at his own request, and did he offer freely to pay therefore fair and lawful interest. Have I already promised elsewhere this sum which is due me on the third day from now."

Seemed Hollis to show some disappointment that his brother's creditor were in small way minded to humor him in this matter. After had he hesitated, no doubt in hope that would be offered to his brother in this matter some delay, he said that they would see what they might do toward the getting of the sum in time. When had the man withdrawn himself, did my host, with an odd smile and shrug of shoulder, say:

"Hath brother Jones, and he as well, the wish upon myself to now impose. Read I the man like to a book. Besides, must I put money in my purse."

Years thereafter was I minded of these words, when I read the tragedy of Othello, in which I found Iago's small discourse upon the text: "Put money in thy purse." Now did I say to my host that I should the same night at the Globe Theatre have pleasure of seeing one of his tragedies enacted. Whereat stole there a cloud across his brow, and he spoke thus:

"It is like thou wilt be pleased with Burbridge, as struts he cross the stage and rants. Would he but study out my lines the half as well as studies he his struts, would I have cause to blush the less for verse set down to me. Will there as well be needless noise and much of pother. Yet wilt thou like it, if for no other cause than that 'tis new to thee."

Seemed the poet then in thoughtful mood; and since

were I like now to be no fit companion for him, I took my leave after thanking him for that he had entertained me in so choice a way. Said I as well that I would set out for Wiltshire upon the morrow. Did he now shake me gently by the hand, and say he wished me speedy possession of my estates, by the means of which might I set up as country gentleman.

Passed I the time till sundown about the streets. Then went I to my inn, where had I supper and tarried till were it past the hour of seven. Now set I out, and found there were full many persons in the street, albeit was the air most chill and raw, since in truth were the month of March not yet half gone. Bore some torches, which gave lights that did much flicker, while were there others with lanterns. And moved all most briskly by reason of the cold. Came I soon unto the Globe Theatre, which I then thought were lighted without much more than any shop. When had I paid for entrance, I found many people seated below the stage, which looked to me most broad and deep. As well did I perceive persons seated above my head in galleries. Came there a man who touched me on the shoulder, and said that by payment of a few shillings might I have seat upon the stage. Did I pay to him the price he named, and then led he the way up a few steps and were I upon the boards which would soon the actors tread. Was I given a small stool to sit upon; and did the man as well request of me that in the great excitement of the play I should not move me too far forward. Now people flocked in one large stream into the place. Were there those who wore fine apparel, and others of most shabby look. Saw I many women who bore themselves in bold way, albeit were some of them quite fair. And were

it most plain that they had come there alone, not so much to see the play, as to attract notice of such men as held loose hands upon their purse strings. In the galleries sat some scores of ladies, of whom a number were not minded to have it known to the others who they were, since wore they masks upon their faces. Came there others on the stage who had, as well as I, paid for the right to there sit. Did I hear the hum of many voices, some low and others loud. And was there upon the air the savor of many breaths; and in this I fancied that my nose could note both the smell of spirits and of garlic. Soon the assembled people began to wear expectant faces. And many of them did make manifest their great impatience by the stamping of their feet, and by low whistles. Were there some wags present, who uttered many silly things, and now and then a shred of real wit, to the great joy of their own selves and of some about them, who oft at their words would yield to laughter. At length came there o'er the place a hush, and the play began.

Seemed it to me that 'twould have been well to hang up some rough painting as a background for the actors. But instead was there at each new scene shown a board, on the which was writ the name of the place whereat was it supposed to be enacted. Came in Burbridge for much applause, as did he strut and rant in character of Richard Third. Yet spoke he not in exact way the words as I, years thereafter found them in my book of Shakespeare's writings. And as well the other players seemed to speak in careless fashion, not giving to the lines that smooth flow and rhythm which have these in the book. Likewise uttered they not one half the words that I found written for their parts. Did not my poet appear that night in

this his tragedy. Caught I glimpse of him twice, as stood he at one side within a passage-way and looked out upon the stage. The first time was while Burbridge with his struts was ranting through some lines and robbing them of much of the smoothness with which had they been written. Then did I note on Shakespeare's face a most weary look. The other time when I saw him was he with his back turned towards this same man Burbridge, who waited without for his time to return upon the stage. Yet was not this actor now alone, for had gone in to speak with him a fresh-faced, fine-looking woman, who seemed to much admire him, while did he smile upon her with look of great conceit. And while the pair talked the poet no doubt o'erheard what they said; and I noted then that there came an odd smile upon his face, and did he as well in slight way shrug his shoulder. Had this same woman who spoke with Burbridge a seat, with her maid, nigh to where I watched the play. And when went her actor again upon the stage, came she back to her maid to whom she said in a loud whisper, which could I not help but overhear:

"Is it in truth delightful! For hath the dear Master Burbridge given promise to come unto my house after the play. Will he be in character of Richard Third, and as such will sup with me. Shall we leave early, Jane, that we may prepare for him a supper which shall do honor to so great an actor. Would it be well for us to go so soon as we are like to find without the door Tom waiting with lantern to light us home."

Did some who sat upon the stage, and as well others out upon the floor, show lack of courtesy toward those lesser actors, who took part of servants, and of soldiers in the

armies of both Richmond and unhappy Richard. At these were thrown many jibes by the unfeeling people; and might the poor fellows make no reply by either word or fist. Some little while before the tragedy had come to end, did the woman who admired Burbridge, with her maid, leave no doubt that they might prepare for the actor the supper to which had he been bidden. When came the final struggle upon Bosworth Field, I saw one finely dressed but foppish youth, who had sat upon a stool not far from me, reach out his foot and kick two of Richard's soldiers, who had fell nigh to him in pretended death. When was the play at end, tarried I some little while in hope that I might have glimpse of Shakespeare once again; yet saw I naught of him. Were the theatre well nigh empty of its throng, when joined I the straggling stream that passed out into the street. Did it now look dark and gloomy without, for all the torches and the lanterns among the crowd. And heard I many voices, and as well the rattle of coach wheels. When had I gone some distance, as I supposed in direction of my inn, I perceived that I had lost the way. Came I then upon a most dark and filthy street, and as I turned away from this, ran there at me of a sudden a tall villain, who seemed to raise his arm, as if to strike me with something which he grasped. Drew I my sword in quick way, and gave to him a thrust upon the arm above the elbow. With cry of pain did he drop what found I to be a bludgeon; and then he made off in the darkness, no doubt with much fear lest he might again feel my sharp blade.

Soon came I into a street where were houses of a sort which bespoke the truth that were their tenants persons of some substance. Of one of these I noted that there

was much light within; and as well I heard loud peals of laughter. Did this seem to come from some woman, and was its heartiness so pleasing unto me that I paused to listen further to the same. Would the laughter cease for a moment, and then break forth again with strength renewed. Was I of belief that the woman did now listen to some much amusing tale, the which was being told to her by one apt in the relation of such. Heard I now footsteps, and looking round I saw one coming down the street, whose way of motion seemed to me familiar. Then as drew the person nigh I perceived no less a man than Burbridge himself, wrapped in a long cloak, beneath which he no doubt wore yet his costume of the Third Richard. Came now to me the thought that this might be the house of she who had bidden him to sup with her. Since were I minded to see him strut into the place, drew I back and stood behind a tree. Passed Burbridge to the door of the yet-lighted house and loudly knocked thereat. Presently there came a serving-man, to ask who might be there. And did he put the question in a gruff voice. Made Burbridge this reply in haughty tone:

"Fellow, tell thy mistress that hath come Richard the Third, by her own wish; and moreover tell her that his Majesty hath no liking to be kept long shivering without."

The man now closed the door, as if to take this message unto his mistress. And was he gone some little time, while did the actor on the door-step dance for warmth. At last was the door part way opened, and I heard this message spoken in a loud, firm tone:

"Was I bid tell thee William the Conqueror was afore Richard Third."

Whereat did the man slam the door in the very face of

Master Burbridge; and then heard I the sound of bolts fastening within. Now the actor heaped in low voice many curses upon the head of one, whose name I caught not, but whom believed I to be none other than the poet whose grand verse had he upon the stage that night much ill-treated in way of utterance. As passed he up the street did I follow, thinking to ask him that he would direct me to the way which I had lost. But at the first corner came I upon some houses which I remembered passing as went I to the theatre. And so in some few moments more came I safely to my hostel.

XXV.

HENRY OF NAVARRE.

Upon the morrow set I forth for Perling Manor with Richard Peasley, rejoicing in the use of his recovered eyes. Hung the head of our man Mark as rode he behind his master; and were I at loss to know if he now repented him of laying hands on certain trifles that belonged not to himself, or if he did regret the not having taken things which had chanced to lie within his easy reach. Pondered I much upon my poet as rode I along the now muddy road, albeit did fair young Constance Leigh more than once long tarry in my thoughts. When had we come to the journey's end, was good Squire Peasley lost in greater wonder than had I afore seen him give expression to, at learning that his son's eyes were well and strong once more.

Passed swiftly by the next half year; and then on the evening of the last day but one of August came there to me a message from Sir Francis Wynnington. Had now my good guardian brought about the release of Merton from the extortion of they who had long held it under guise of Law. And did this message, brought by one Stephen Bronson who had chanced to stop at Bidwell on his way to Bristol, bid me forthwith to ride to Merton, where would I be like to find my kinsman. Then took I leave of the good Squire, who is there no need to say, were

filled with much wonder. And his kind Dame seemed to have at heart that wish for my happiness which gave she expression to. Did Richard's eyes grow dim once more, albeit this time only from the tears. And seemed as well the servants sorry to have me depart from Perling. Had I the mind to give to Mark a pair of old shoe-buckles, which 'twas my fancy he had long his eyes upon. Yet when went I to look for these, were the same gone.

"Mayhap Mark already has them," was my thought. "And if so be, is he most truly welcome to the buckles."

Set I forth upon this journey in most high spirits, and did I upon the way make resolve to soon cross the sea to France and seek the hand of Constance. And in this matter, within my own fancy, had I now all success. When rode I, on the second day, through a wood somewhere on the border of Hampshire, nigh to where the same doth join upon Berkshire, sprang there out from behind a tree a young highwayman, who made demand of such sum of money as I might have about me, with threat that he would else have my life. As did I not seem minded to part with either, raised he a pistol to aim at me. Yet ere had he done this thing, my sword was drawn, and knocked I from out his clumsy hand the weapon. Did he now strive to fly; but in his hurry tripped he and fell upon the ground. Leaped I from off the back of my new horse Sam, and had the fellow at my mercy. As did he beg of me to spare him, was I minded how the olden Knight was wont to send his vanquished ones about, breathing loud the praises of the mistress of his heart. And came the odd thought that if I should send this one forth, in payment for his life, to tell the world of the great charms of Constance, would I have need to give to

him as well my purse for sustenance upon the way. When put I some questions to the rogue I found that this were his first attempt at robbery, to the which did he plead that he were in truth by hunger driven. When had he made promise to amend his ways, I gave to him one guinea in exchange for his pistol, and set him free. Was this pistol a wretched weapon, that would have been as like to have burst in his own hands, as to have sent at myself its bullet. I cast the thing into the first broad stream it was my chance to cross.

Filled was my heart with gladness when I at length rode up the avenue of trees, at end of which stood dear old Merton Hall. And there awaited me Sir Francis, who with three of our old servants that did I well remember, wished me much joy in having thus come into mine own. Did he explain in weary detail the workings of the Law, by the which had I been cheated. As well did he show how at last was brought this injustice unto an end. Gave I to my guardian most hearty thanks for all he had done for me. And was I as well in some few days able to make return of all those sums for which had I so long been indebted to him, since were now paid in to me by tenants, of whom some had I known from childhood, the rents for the quarter. From Sir Francis did I learn that his Walter was to wed Maud de Wycherly about the time of Christmas, and that I would no doubt be bidden to the wedding-feast at Gorley Castle. When asked I of him what had become of Master Hackett Sir Francis told me that my old friend had been named the heir of an aged kinsman of substance, with whom he now dwelt in Middlesex. And was I in truth rejoiced at the good fortune of one with whom had I passed so many pleasant hours in study.

Went I into Merton church-yard, and when had I stood for a time beside my dear sire's grave, I perceived another tombstone upon which was cut the name of Parson Hayden, who was here set down as one of shining virtues. Was now Merton's Parson a man of middle age by name of Porter. And were he more reverend in look and in his life than the one who held the post before him. Yet was Master Porter wont to look well unto his tithes, the which in truth was it no more than right he should do. Had I hearty welcome from my old neighbors. Found I Sir Harry Bullard and his wife in good health; and seemed good Lady Clayton to have grown younger rather than older.

When had Sir Francis returned to Bidwell, did I in speedy fashion strive to set affairs at rights, with view to leaving for a while my estates of Merton, since was I not minded to put off for one needless hour my journey into Picardy. And with thought that I might be gone some little time, I asked Parson Porter to act for me while I were absent. Were made out the Law papers, by the which was he given power to do this; and did I sign these in presence of young Squire Harper, the son of him who had come to Merton in my behalf soon after the death of my father. And, as it thereafter came about, was this same step a wise one.

Upon the back of Sam, who proved himself nigh to as fleet of foot as might I have wished, rode I to Dover. Then was I forced to tarry two whole days on board the staunch craft Nancy, ere came the winds that might take us cross the narrow sea to France. After I had landed at Boulogne, and had once more satisfied the King's officers that I had come into their country for no purposes of

wrong, went I to an inn. Then sent I for a tailor, who with his man came to me, bringing divers suits of choice apparel. From these I chose one that was to my liking, and which the man assured me were of the finest texture and the newest fashion. Bought I as well a hat, and fine shoes, together with some shirts of a new pattern I had never seen before. And did I likewise make purchase of a neat bag for the holding of apparel, that might be strapped on behind my saddle. Would I myself have fully been content to wear naught save that I had brought from Perling; yet deemed I it wise to make myself more spruce, in hope of finding favor in the eyes of Count de Brecy. Placing the new garments with much of care within the bag, did I fasten this upon Sam's back. Then mounting, I began my journey on the pleasant road which had I traveled some three years gone by. My heart beat with more than wonted vigor, as rode I beneath the hill where stood the stone chateau of the de Brecys. Were it past the sundown when came I to the old Ship Inn, where was I given welcome by a new host, one who loved much to talk. While sat I at my supper, did he ask of me if I had noted, as I came along, the stone chateau high up above the road.

"I did," said I in eager tone. "'Tis there the Count de Brecy dwells with his—sister."

"Nay," he said, in manner of one who takes much of pride in his own knowledge. "Hath his sister, Milady Leigh, been dead these six months. But doth her most fair daughter dwell there still. Yet was it not of her I had wish to speak, when I asked your worship if he had perceived the stone chateau. It was my desire to have thee know that, just two months gone by, his Majesty,

the great Henry, did pause there for two days. And came many of his train to my house to the emptying of my larder, and the great lowering of my wine-casks."

Did I pay little heed unto his long account of what had said and done the King's followers at his hostel; and was I glad to take refuge from his busy tongue in my quiet chamber. Two hours past the noon of the next day I arrayed myself with much of care in my new apparel, and set out for the chateau. As I drew at length nigh to the same did I perceive the Count de Brecy seated on the porch, and looking down in absent way upon the ground. Was I within some yards of him ere he looked up and saw me. Then he said in tone of coldness:

"So, So, Sir Walter, thou art here again with thy pupil to give him benefit of change of air?"

When learned he that I had no pupil now, since had I at last gained possession of my estates of Merton, did he wish me joy of my good fortune. And thought I from his manner that he now had for me some slight regard. When I asked of him how his niece bore the loss of her loved mother, showed he some small annoyance, and said that she no doubt grieved much for her parent's death. And now heard I the voice of Constance calling forth my name. I turned and beheld her, a woman now, albeit had she reached but sixteen years. Looked she most winsome in her black; and was I much charmed by the pleasant light which shone within her eyes, and the soft glow which now came upon her cream-like cheeks. Was Count de Brecy ill-pleased no doubt that I were given such welcome by his niece, and did he arise and walk away. Constance now led the way into the large hall, where sat we

down. Then told she in tearful way of the last days of her departed mother. For the dear maid in this her loss showed I much of sympathy. Then learned I that she were now mistress there in her mother's stead; and came to me the thought that for this same reason Count de Brecy would be loathe to give up his niece. When asked she me touching my own affairs, and I told her that I had come into mine own, did she clap her hands and give expression to much pleasure. Next I told her I had learned by chance that so great a man as King Henry the Fourth had made visit there. Then blushed she in slight manner and said:

"Is the King in truth a most grand gentleman." And now turning quickly her talk unto another matter, went she on: "Did there tarry, not so long while ago, at the Ship Inn for nigh to a month one who knows thee, and yet hath for thyself a strange and deep hatred."

"Who hath hatred for me!" I said. "Know I of not one who would be like to so regard me—unless it be Paul——"

"In truth was it none other than Paul de Wycherly. And were he as well my suitor, albeit was I unkind enough to laugh at the soft things he said to me. Vowed I as well that he were not in earnest. When would he speak most ill and unkind things of thee, and I would make my defence of Sir Walter, would he grind well his teeth. Did he say once that he had made himself a master of the fencing art, and that would he one day show thee some tricks with swords. So let me warn thee to look out for this same Master de Wycherly."

Did I assure Constance that I had little to fear from Paul, since had I perceived by his handling of the foil

that he would never be more than small master of the sword. And now of a sudden came there running into the hall, and all out of breath, a serving-man who in way of great excitement, called out:

"Has the master bidden me to say to all that the King is coming!"

Showed Constance some surprise to hear this. Then went she forth upon the porch, telling me to follow that I might aid her to do honor to the King. When I were come without the door I beheld the great Henry with his suite of nigh to a dozen courtiers, and some two score men-at-arms, riding slowly toward the chateau. Did the brightnesss of their attire and the glitter of the helmets, seem to catch the eye of Constance, which now shone with pleasure at the sight. When came they nearer was I struck by the majestic way in which sat the King upon his horse. And looked I eagerly at each of his courtiers to see if there were among these the Duke of Sully, whose wise counsels had proved of so great avail unto his sovereign; yet saw I no one who to my eye would pass for that great man. Stood the Count de Brecy ready to welcome his royal master so soon as might he alight. And when had the King set foot upon the ground, and was permitting his hand to be kissed by the kneeling Count, had I a good look at this famed person. Though nigh to fifty years of age, he yet bore himself like to a young man. Was there a martial look about his frank and handsome face, and did he carry high his head. Noted I the look of sound sense, rather than of great wisdom, on his brow. And in truth had he oft shown his sense by leaving his affairs to the wisdom of the Duke of Sully.

Was there about his eyes the look of one who hath much love of life and of its pleasures. Yet did I fancy that I saw as well the traces of his courage, and his love of justice. And in truth was he, as Will Shakespeare put it in his Lear, "every inch a King."

XXVI.

A GLAD SURPRISE.

As came the King in stately way up the steps, did his face light up with admiration at the sight of fair Constance, who made to him a low courtesy. Then he in easy way placed hand to his heart, and with a kiss upon his finger-tips, waved he these toward her with a graceful motion, and a most gallant glance. When Henry perceived me a slight shadow crept across his brow. Then he said, looking at the maid:

"Am I most pleased, fair Constance, to behold thee once again, grown already lovelier than when I admired thee but two months gone by. Now who may be this young gentleman, who hath indeed an English look?"

Then did Constance present me to the King, telling him my name, and saying that we had been friends since she were but five years old. Though made I to the monarch a low bow, yet seemed he not of mind to take more than slight notice of myself. Gave me the Count de Brecy a sour look from out the corners of his eyes, as if 'twere his wish that I should in speedy manner get me gone. Had I for my part no reason to remain the guest of one to whom I were not welcome, save that it was hard to be so soon banished from the presence of Constance. Now passed the King, with his host and some of his courtiers, inside the door. And as Constance was about to follow,

I begged of her in a few hurried words that she would find the time to talk with me a little in an arbor to right of the chateau the same even just after moon rise, which would be at about the hour of ten. After a moment's thought she replied:

"Too bad it is my uncle is so rude to my old friend. And for that same reason will I to-night, if it be within my power, meet thee at the arbor when hath the moon arisen."

Whereat gave she to myself a pleasant smile, and quickly went inside. Was I happy in her promise, assuring myself that would naught prevent her coming to me. And did I already in my fancy behold her with me in the moon's soft light. Yet could I not at once send myself away, but hovered round the place in hope that I might catch still another glimpse of her. So presently, under pretence of gazing at certain of the King's men-at-arms who lounged about, went I and stood nigh to a window, and glanced therein. Then did I perceive the brown, curling locks of Constance, whose head seemed to be turned from me. And I heard a voice, which I recalled as that of the great King himself. Though were the tones low, yet came to my ear most plainly every word which he now did utter. Said he this:

"Am I, sweet Constance, now o'erjoyed to catch thee thus alone, and to tell thee how passing fair thou art. But a moment since, ere that sweet blush o'erspread thy cheeks, did their pure whiteness recall unto my mind the lilies of my throne. Would I had freedom now to ask of thee to sit by my side, where couldst thou match them with thy fairness! Curses on the head of him or her who shall come hither to interrupt us! Yet will some

one surely do this same thing. I have it! Will there be a moon to-night, at about the hour of ten. When is it risen to bathe earth in its mild light, wrap around thy shoulders a soft cloak, and come thou out upon the porch where shall I, thy King, await thee, my queen, in all impatience. Then shall we walk, not in the broad light, but in the pleasant shadows of the trees. One kiss, sweet Constance, to show me that thou mak'st promise to come unto me as have I begged of thee to do!"

Had there now from the window disappeared the brown locks; and though I did listen with intent ears, heard I not one further sound. Then with anger at the King, and with sickening dread lest should Constance yield unto this regal tempter, went I slowly back to the inn. There found I some of the courtiers and the men-at-arms, among whom was our host passing with joyful look and many words, asking what would their worships be pleased to drink or eat. Paid I no heed to the many jests and strange, soft oaths, which were now uttered by the King's people. Going to my chamber, I strove to hope that would Constance prove true unto the promise which had she made me. Then did I reflect that the Count de Brecy surely had perceived the true reason of the King's coming to his chateau this second time within a two months. And I felt sure that would this man accept favors of his sovereign in exchange for his own niece. Was I now the more angry at this Count than was I at the King, who was minded to stand betwixt me and my long cherished hope. Yet thought I, wavering back and forth from glad hopes to despairing fears, that it rested all with Constance. And so I waited in my chamber till long past the coming of the darkness. Were I

not minded to have supper, since was there in me no hunger. But was my throat much parched with thirst, and drank I one long draught of cool water.

At length I set forth from the inn, which resounded now with the shouts and laughter of the King's men. Was there some show of brightness in the East, above where the moon were soon to rise, when began I in the darkness to ascend the hill toward the chateau. Went I slowly up, and stood without the arbor when the moon's silver rim first showed itself above the distant woods. Then I looked toward the porch, and perceived I there the figure of a man wrapped in a cloak. Stepped I in the arbor door, that I might the better watch without being myself seen. Did the figure at the porch now move quickly back and forth. Was the bearing of this one of a lofty kind, which gave me no room to doubt but that it were the King. And was there now upon me much dread that I should behold a slighter figure, wrapped within a cloak, to come forth and meet him. Waited I some moments longer, and then of a sudden did I perceive that Henry were not alone. By him stood some one smaller than himself, and in a cloak. I uttered one groan of agony, and with hands upon my head sank I down upon a bench within the arbor. Then fled the pangs from out my heart in most sudden way, for from close at hand came the soft, sweet voice of Constance, which said, albeit in an anxious tone:

"Fear I, Sir Walter, thou art far from well. Have I sat here in silence and watched thee go on in strange manner."

And there sat the maid I loved. Placed I my hand upon her arm to make sure that I dreamed not. Then

sprang I to my feet and looked back to where I had seen another with the King. And now did I perceive this person to be a man, who as I looked passed within the chateau.

"Constance," said I, "was I sick unto the death with fear that thou wouldst come not to me in this arbor, but to the King yonder at the porch. I heard him beg of thee to meet him there at the rising of the moon."

"True, Sir Walter, he did urge me to so do, using words of flattery, and giving many glances of the sort that sometimes do fascinate. And yet ere the rising of the moon came I unto this arbor."

Thereat I seized sweet Constance in my arms, where lay she still, resisting not, while on her lips, and cheeks, and brows, and throat rained I summer storms of kisses. And in the brief calms which came between these same, I whispered in her ears how much and truly I loved her. And did she after I had used some urging words, assure me that her heart now was, and should be ever, in my keeping. Then did I lift her gently to her feet, and with my arm around her, we stood and looked to where the King yet walked in impatient way. Now I told her how it was that I, in striving to catch glimpse of her, had o'erheard the King make his urgent plea unto her. Next I said:

"Am I full sure thou didst not give to Henry the kiss for which he begged."

At this tossed she her head in most arch way, and then made reply:

"Had I no chance, for scarce had he made his request of me when came there in two servants for directions from myself. Then said the King in low voice that he

would surely look for me, since could I not have within me so hard a heart as to give him the pangs of disappointment."

"And, my darling, must he have been firm in this wrong belief, or would he not have waited for thee yonder."

"Yet, Walter, is it now more than like that he begins to have his doubts?"

"Now, sweet Constance, must I commend thee that thou didst come so early to the arbor. From this same thing, am I led to believe that thou shalt prove ever prompt."

"Be not so sure of that, dear Walter. If I had tarried till the moon had risen, would the King have seen me coming hither, and would he have been like to follow."

Next did I ask of her if there were one hour of the day more than another, when might I find her uncle in a humor to listen to my plea for her hand. Shook she her head, and with a sigh replied:

"In this matter is he like to prove as cold and hard of heart at one time of the day as at another. Yet, dear Walter, will I wait patiently. Therein shall I show my love for thee. Will it be cause for wonder how I will wait. Yes, indeed will I wait long."

"Nay, precious Constance," said I, "be not so anxious to o'erdo this same matter of thy waiting."

Fled the time most swiftly by until my love perceived that had Henry retired from his vigil. And did the moon's height show that it were grown very late. Found I then that she would enter the chateau at a certain small door, whereof had she the key. Went I with her unto the same door, and there told her that I would, some three hours past the noon of the first day after the King's de-

parture, go unto the Count de Brecy and demand her of him. Then having taken some few tender kisses, did I permit Constance to enter at the door. As walked I away with light step, I passed close to a clump of high bushes; and then my ears caught sounds, which might have been a smothered curse. Paused I not to assure myself what this should truly be; but quickly went I on toward the Ship Inn, thinking only of my happiness. Seemed my feet scarce to touch the ground as I walked, so much were I in spirits lifted up. And when came I to the hostel, though were it past the midnight hour, found I nigh to a dozen of the King's people yet calling for the host's wine, the which did he serve with cheerful face and with voice hoarse from much talking. When had I gained my chamber, sat I for some time by the window and listened to the jesting and the songs of the other guests. Did I now hold these to be pleasant, witty fellows, whose words amused me much. And had I no doubt they enjoyed their lives greatly, as deserved they to do. Was I now in a most kindly humor; and had there then gone by some loud-braying ass, would I no doubt have named it as a pleasant beast, albeit of somewhat discordant voice.

On the morrow was I awakened by the noise and bustle of the men-at-arms, who seemed to be in act of preparation for the journey, which heard I one of them to say would be renewed forthwith. When had I broke my fast, heard I one call out to another that the King were coming along the road. Went I with the others out upon the wayside, and I saw Henry riding toward us, followed by many of his suite. When had he come opposite to the Ship Inn, did he draw rein and alight. Then went he

into the hostel, and taking seat did he permit the host to bring him a cup of wine. And in his wish to kiss the hand of his great master, the excited publican splashed many drops upon the royal boots. Yet was he only called to task for asking forgivenness in so profuse a way as to make himself most wearisome. When had he been assured by one of his officers that all of his suite had come together and there awaited him, the King went forth. And in passing out the hostel, did he chance to brush gainst my sleeve. Then bowing low, I craved of him his pardon for that I had stood by accident within his path. Now seemed he to recall my face, and came there o'er his countenance a sour look. Made he no reply, but strode unto his horse and quickly mounted. Then did there of a sudden seem to come upon this great man a sense of what was right and just. For turned he his head about and waved to me his hand in fashion of right kingly courtesy. And now, as he rode away, saw I the white-plumed hero of Ivry.

When were it some two hours past the noon of that same day, set I forth upon my mission to de Brecy. Did Constance meet me at the door of the chateau with most winsome smile, yet gave she slight shrug of shoulder when I asked of her in what humor she had found her uncle since the King's departure. Then she said:

"Would I truly not be in thy shoes when thou art with my guardian yonder in his library."

"Hath come into my mind, sweet Constance, the thought of swift flight, should he not be minded to listen to the words of reason which shall come from my lips."

"Would I like, dear Walter, to prove thy constancy for

some little while, ere we take such step. But go thou in to my uncle, while remain I without praying much for thy success."

Then passed I in unto the door of the same room, where once before had I seen the Count. When had I knocked, was I bidden in a sharp voice to enter, and so doing did I stand in the presence of him who were guardian to my Constance. Did he look up at me, first in surprise, and then with a look of some displeasure spreading o'er his countenance. As bowed I in respectful manner, he said:

"How now, Sir Walter! Why dost thou in such persistent fashion come ever to where it must be full plain to thee thou art not welcome."

Then made I bold to say that I had won the heart of his dear niece, and had come to beg his sanction to our marriage. When had I paused, did he shake his head gravely, and say, as if to himself:

"Might she have chosen far more wisely than this."

It came then to my head to ask of him if he thought it better for his sister's child that she should be bestowed upon the King, than to become the honored wife of a Knight of England. But checked I my tongue in time, and in the stead of that, did say:

"True, sir, there be many gentlemen of higher rank and much more of wealth than myself, who would be proud to marry Constance; yet have I many doubts if she would be happy with any of such."

"Yet," he urged in a much softer manner, "dost thou consider that she hath barely passed her sixteenth birthday?"

Then I quickly pointed out that though her age were

but sixteen, my own years were some six and twenty. And thus might we both, by law of average, be deemed as being at the age of one-and-twenty. Yet did he not seem minded to follow me in this reasoning. Next he asked of me if, in coming into my own, I had taken care to put my estates in thorough order. Were I forced to make admission that I had not tarried long at Merton, through my great desire to at once see Constance. Then did he say:

"Wert thou no prudent man to so neglect thy interest. And do I counsel thee at once to return unto thy estates, and be at pains to find out the condition of each field, and as well of every building. See what there may be which stands in need of some improvement; and to that same look thou well. Until thou hast done all this, come thou not to me asking for my niece."

"Then, sir," exclaimed I in eager way, "when have I done that which thou hast pointed out, shall I look to have the hand of Constance?"

"Nay, not so fast as that, Sir Walter. Yet will I say that the sooner thou dost begin this matter, the sooner shalt thou be able to return."

"Mayhap in a six months, I may do this," I urged, and at same moment within myself weighing if I might not as well have named four months, or even three.

"Nay," made he reply, "canst thou not attend to these affairs of thine in less than one full year."

Did I deem it wise to accept this time of banishment as being within bounds of reason. And then in most respectful way took I leave of Count de Brecy, who but gave to me his chill nod at parting. Was Constance awaiting me, with face which did bespeak the truth that

she were most anxious to know how I fared at the Count's hands. When had I related to her all which was spoken by him, she said:

"Hast thou had more of kindness from my uncle than I looked for. And am I full sure that, when the time he named has swiftly fled, will he yield the boon thou dost ask."

"Thou dost speak of the time, sweet Constance, as if 'twere naught," did I now say. "In truth have we to wait twelve whole months."

"And yet, dear Walter, do the whole dozen months make but one small year."

When had I taken a most tender parting of her who was my promised wife, I hurried back to the Ship Inn and give order that Sam should be quickly saddled. Then paid I my reckoning to the publican, who was now unto a gaping crowd telling o'er again of the King's visit to his hostel. And set I forth with full intent to follow in all faithfulness the counsel of de Brecy.

XXVII.

TRYING YEARS.

Have I many times heard it said that when misfortunes do await, hath the victim of these some mystic warning, such as dreams, or mayhap a strange foreboding of evil within his own mind. Yet hath not this ever come to pass with me. For now, going as I did toward a sore calamity, were I most cheerful in my thoughts, and oft singing softly to myself in praise of Constance, as rode I on the way. At Boulogne found I a small craft, by name the Lively Peggy, making ready to set sail for Dover. Did I bargain for a passage, and was Sam with much of trouble placed on board. When the wind seemed to favor him the master, one Curtis, brought up his anchor, and with sails filled steered toward the white cliffs on the North horizon.

Scarce had the night set in, when of a sudden came there a wild wind from out the East, which fast grew stronger. For the safety of his ship did Curtis run her before the blast. But towards the morn was she tripped by a great wave and flung over upon her side. Went my poor Sam then into the sea, and in the darkness was he swept away and drowned. To right the bark upon her keel, were the masts quickly cut away. Did we now in helpless way drift before the wind; yet could the staunch timbers of the hull well resist the fury of the waves, and

was there no leak to add unto our dangers. Kept on the storm all of the day which followed, and was the air of such thickness that no one might see more than small way from the much-washed and heavy-rolling decks.

Upon the second morn had wind and waves subsided much, yet was there upon the sea a thick mist. And had now Curtis a look of some anxiety upon his face, since had he the fear of going blindly on some reef. Had the sailors in readiness two small boats, by the which might we leave the bark should she strike. Had I fastened already well about me certain trinkets and a lock of hair which had I got from Constance, and as well my purse. And now did the mist quickly dispel, and one of the seamen called out that he perceived from certain distant rocks that we had drifted nigh to the Solent, which lies twixt the Hampshire shore and the Isle of Wight. The next moment did the craft strike heavily upon a hidden reef, and albeit floating clear of the rocks, was her prow smashed in. Ere she had filled with water and gone down, were the two boats launched; and into these had every soul quickly gotten. Was I in the same boat with Curtis, who bore up well, though had he lost much of his small wealth with the Lively Peggy. Made the two boats at length a safe landing upon the Hampshire shore, where did we return our thanks to God for that he had brought us with life and limb through the perils of the shipwreck.

Went Curtis and his men on foot toward Portsmouth, which town were well known to them all. Asked I of some persons, whom I saw upon the shore, where I were like to be able to make purchase of a horse. Were I directed to a small hamlet some two miles distant, and there did I buy from a farrier an old nag and a much-

worn saddle. With these set I out for Merton. Had I not ridden far before came it into my mind that I should do well to turn aside and go by way of Winchester, where might I pause to look upon the famed cathedral of that town. So in the direction of Winchester I turned the nag's head. Came I into that town the same even as it grew dark; and I found lodging at the hostel of the Twin Dials. Here did I rest me well after the fatigues of the two days and nights gone by. Arose I in the morn with thoughts of Constance, and as I broke my fast was I most light of heart. At length went I toward the cathedral, and viewed the same from different points without. Then as I were about to enter at the door, did I perceive coming out none other than my Lady Clayton, who was with Dame Hurley, wife of Squire Hurley of Oakley Hall, with whom were she then upon a visit. Was I now presented to the Dame, a kindly lady albeit most vain of her small hands, the which was she, on this pretext and on that, bringing to my notice. Next Lady Clayton asked of me when I had last heard of her little guest of years gone by. Took I much of pleasure in telling her that I had won the heart of Constance, to whom had I hope of being married in a year. Did Lady Clayton show much of delight at learning of this thing, and she asked many questions touching the same. At parting my Lady, and the Dame as well, wished me joy of my good fortune. After I had much admired this noble sanctuary within, and came forth into the air, I perceived at some small distance the Lady Clayton having speech with a young gentleman about whom was there that which seemed familiar to my eye. When had I looked at him the more closely, did I recall to mind Paul de Wycherly, than whom could this be none other. And

was he no doubt now hearing with small pleasure of my success with Constance.

Now went I to my inn of the Twin Dials and called for my nag and my reckoning. But had I gone little way when I noted that my beast trod as if one of his shoes had been cast. When had I alighted I found not only that his left hind shoe were gone, but as well that its mate were like soon to come off. Led I the nag unto a farrier who had his shop hard by; and there I saw already four other horses waiting to be shod. Were it like to be some while ere the turn of my animal should come; and so strolled I about, thinking that great Alfred had trod those ways when was the old town his capital. As chanced I to pass a certain tavern had I the mind to quench my thirst with a cup of small ale. When had I entered and called for this same drink, I glanced about the place, and perceived seated at a table Paul de Wycherly with two companions of nigh to his own age. Were the three now emptying a flask of red wine. While were his two companions in light spirits and much chattering, wore Master Paul upon his face a gloomy look. Then came to me the thought that would I now have within my heart many pangs, if I had just then heard from Lady Clayton that Paul had won the promise of Constance to become his wife. And were I not now minded to add to the wretchedness of this young gentleman by having him perceive me. So when I had drank my ale did I move toward the door-way. Just then fell upon me the eye of Paul, and came there into his face a look of hatred, which gave way most quickly to one of disdain. And then in sneering fashion, called he out to me:

"How now, Sir Walter, art thou traveling with some pupil, to bring about improvement of his health?"

"Nay," made I reply, "am I now intent on other business."

Whereat I stepped quickly toward the doorway. Then did his manner change, and coming toward me in a pleasing tone he begged of myself to tarry for a moment that I might make trial of his wine, and as well be made known unto his friends. Having no wish to seem a churl I went with him to his table, where took I a seat after I had made exchange of courteous bows with the two young gentlemen, whom he named as Master de Skeyton, son of Sir Ralph de Skeyton of Curling Manor, and Master Fitz-Owen, son of Squire Fitz-Owen of Tarnley Hall. Was de Skeyton of slender build but of fine features, albeit was his skin sallow and covered much with pimples. Fitz-Owen was stout with full face and clear red cheeks, which gave to him almost the appearance of a girl. While noted I these things Paul slowly filled his own glass from the flask. Then of a sudden did he with angry look, and to my astonishment as well as that of his two friends, dash into my face the wine. Now sprang I to my feet; but as I did this was I able to hold my wrath in subjection, by reason of the thought that Paul were in truth maddened by the knowledge of my having won the prize he had longed and striven for. So were I minded to bear with him in this matter, albeit were his insult a most grievous one. And as I wiped off from my face the wine drops, I said with as much of calmness as could I command:

"Thine honored sire, Paul, ne'er taught to thee such courtesy as this."

Would I have then left the place had not Paul said to his friends, while pointing finger at me in scornful way:

"And yet that coward was once called a good fencer—with the foils. 'Tis plain he hath not courage of the kind that prompts a man to draw his sword. See in what craven fashion he hath swallowed my affront, demanding therefore no manner of satisfaction."

Did I now perceive that de Skeyton and Fitz-Owen were both looking coldly at me, thinking no doubt that I had refrained from throwing down my gage to the hot-headed youth through fear. And Fitz-Owen said to me:

"Hath our friend offered thee insult, which for thine own honor 'twould be well for thee not to brook."

And now came into my mind the thought that it would be no hard task for me to disarm the fiery Paul, and that after so doing might I express myself as full content with such satisfaction for the insult. So, did I make to Fitz-Owen this reply:

"Am I now minded to go with Paul to some convenient place, and there show to him that I am no coward, and as well that he hath vaunted far too high his own knowledge of the sword."

Did Paul say that it gave to him much of joy to accept of this my offer; and had his two friends the wish to go and see fair play. Would Fitz-Owen guide us to a certain place, where might we have out our affair without being o'errun by throngs of gaping idlers. And led he the way, followed closely by Paul; while came I behind with de Skeyton, who told me in a merry tone of an affair which had he the year before with one who fasely charged him with unfairness in a throw of dice, and whom did he spare

with merely a thrust in the right arm. Then he said, watching me from out the corners of his eyes, that Paul had in truth grown most skilful with his sword.

At length came we upon an ancient and deserted building, beyond which was a garden shut in by a much tottering wall. Through a ruined gateway we passed into the garden, where were the weeds thick and high. Yet found we a place, of breadth sufficient for our needs, that was not o'ergrown. When had we stripped us of our coats and hats, did Paul and myself draw our swords and try these well. Then faced we each other; and I did note upon his countenance a determined look, as if had he full resolved to have my life. Yet had I in my heart no wish to harm this rival who so much hated me.

Scarce had we crossed our swords, when Paul beset me with much of fury, lunging at me in such reskless fashion that I might have had him at my mercy more than once. Did I in easy way ward off his thrusts, watching meanwhile for some chance to disarm him in quick manner. Tried he some new tricks which availed him naught. Yet I made one sad error in that I misjudged a certain move he had in mind. Thinking that it was his purpose to make at me one fierce, straight lunge, did I step nimbly to my right, whereat moved he as quickly to his left. And though passed his sword through my shirt, grazing the flesh upon my right side, did he have the sore mischance to run full upon my own blade. Though pulled I quickly back the weapon, I perceived by the spurt of blood which came from out his wound that was this in truth a grievous one. Did he reel forward, and would have fallen to the earth had I not seized him with both arms, having now

thrown aside my sword. Conscious as I was that I had not from the first been minded to spill one drop of young de Wycherly's mad blood, felt I pity for him rather than pangs of self reproach, as I looked upon his now pallid face. Did I place him gently upon the ground, where lay he breathing heavily, as if in great pain from his wound. Then with a strip, torn quickly from my shirt where had his sword pierced the same, strove I to stanch the flow of blood. In this had I some aid from de Skeyton, whose hand trembled much. Had already Fitz-Owen ran off, saying that he would fetch a surgeon who dwelt hard by. Were Paul's eyes rolled upward, and was it more than like he knew not what person now bent o'er him. Soon did the look of great pain, which had I noted upon his countenance, give place to one more peaceful. Then of a sudden he seemed to lose all sense, though did he gasp in heavy way. And now came Fitz-Owen with his surgeon, a tall dark young man, who soon declared that Paul's life could not be saved. Then having received his fee, did the surgeon calmly pocket this and walk away. Now I perceived that Paul's two friends were both gazing at me in reproachful manner. For mayhap were the twain fully of belief that I, having vantage of a greater skill in the handling of the sword, had given to their friend the thrust with full intent to lay him dead. When some little time thereafter we saw that had Paul gone to his last account, I said to them that it were his mishap to run upon my sword, and that had I no design of doing to him harm. Then they looked at each other in doubtful way, and Fitz-Owen said to me:

"Of truth did he offer unto thee grave insult, and if thou didst, not by accident but with full intent, give to

him the wound of which he died, could I lay to thy door small blame. Will we look out for our poor friend's body, and will send information of this sad affair unto his family. And is it my counsel to thee to get hence in speedy way, and to dwell in much seclusion for at least a six-months."

"Nay," made I reply, "will I go to the first magistrate, and unto him make full explanations of this matter. If thou canst direct me to such an one, shall I do this thing now."

"Then, Sir Walter, if thou wilt be so unwise, thou hast but to go to the large manor-house on the hill yonder to the left, and ask for Squire Howlet. Will he listen to thee fully, albeit is he sometimes a right harsh magistrate."

When had I thanked Fitz-Owen for his guidance, did I pick up my sword, while again looking with pity upon the hapless Paul, who had doomed himself to this his early death, albeit were my hand a chance instrument in bringing this same to pass. Then walked I quickly toward the manor to which had I been directed, and having come there, said I to the servant who answered at my knock that I would see Squire Howlet upon pressing business. Was I shown into the justice-room, where was the Squire scolding in harsh tones a poor poacher, whom did he soon dismiss with a warning that upon the next offence would he not come off thus lightly. Was this magistrate a short, pompous man of middle age, yet did I note somewhat of kindness in his look. Listened he in attentive way, while I gave to him a full and true account of how I had by ill-chance sent a sword thrust which had deprived another of his life. When had I come to end of this, the Squire said:

"You said that this young gentleman who met death

at your hands—by accident—was one Paul de Wycherly. Surely he is not the son of the Baron de Wycherly of Gorley Castle?"

"Sir," made I reply, "was it none other than the son of this same Baron de Wycherly who stumbled gainst my sword."

Whereat the face of Squire Howlet became most grave, and when had he seemed to weigh the matter for some momnts, he said:

"Do I hope that when it is your turn to stand trial, you wilt be able to make this thing plain; yet until such time shall come, will it be my duty to commit you to the jail of Winchester."

Though had I not looked for this thing, made I now no protest, but put upon the matter a good face. Did the magistrate now summon a certain strong-built constable, to whom he delivered me by nod and a motion of the hand as well. Then he quickly wrote out a paper, by virtue of the which was I to be placed in Winchester jail. Having received this paper, the constable took me gently by the arm and led me forth from the manor-house. When had I assured him that I would go whither he desired in willing and quiet way, did he free my arm, although still walking closely by my side. As we went on descanted he upon the freshness of the air, and as well on the beauty of the famed cathedral of his town. Did some idlers, and as well a score of street children, perceive that I were now a prisoner, and followed they us in a wondering and a straggling group.

When were we come unto the jail was entrance given us by a turnkey, and was I taken straightway into the presence of the master of the place, who received the paper,

and then took my sword. This jailor, a stern, rough-looking man of middle age, Noah Cramp by name, ever treated me with kindness, albeit was it said he were severe to such prisoners as gave to him aught of trouble. Did he keep me apart from the others, and in a neat cell, with a long passage-way to walk in. And did I soon grow used to the solitude, while in the same had I much of chance for thought, and for weighing well those impressions formed in my early days, and the which yet lingered in my recollections.

Had I nigh to eight years of this life in Winchester jail. And did I find that same time to be of much use to me in the writing of this history, since have I here set down many things which I had called up and well weighed while under lock and key, and which do I much doubt if I would else have been able to recall with clearness at this late day. Besides the silent turnkey who brought me food and drink, and the jailor Cramp who had of me many sums to be expended in sweets and other presents for his children, saw I none save my faithful friend, good Master Porter. Did Merton's Parson come to me many times, bringing me from my rents such monies as stood I in need of, and as well receiving of me counsel at to his faithful endeavors to bring about my release. And yet in all those trying years did I not once give way unto despair, since kept I ever before me the firm hope of having, within some few days more, my freedom restored to me.

Came there at least once in every year a letter from true Constance, in each of which did she write in cheering and loving way, and as well reminded me of how she had said that she would long wait for me. And wrote I to herself epistles, the which did I have sent to her by mes-

sengers. Brought Jailor Cramp to me from time to time such books as he chanced to lay hands upon. And these did I pour over with much of pleasure. Of one book which he placed within my hands, he said that it were in a foreign tongue, which one of my learning might hope to understand. Was this same book in the Spanish language, and told of the adventures of a certain Don Quixote. Did I read this o'er and o'er with much of laughter, albeit having still within my heart an admiration for the honesty of purpose which marked the brave old crack-brained Knight. Many an hour, that else might have been most weary, was to me made pleasant by that same book, writ by Cervantes. And did I value this next to the letters of Constance, which were well nigh worn out from much reading and as well caressing. With these kept I her lock of hair and the trinkets which had I saved from out the shipwreck.

The reason for my long stay in the jail of Winchester was the stubborn mind of the Baron de Wycherly. Did he ever insist with much of heat that I had taken wrong advantage of my greater skill to slay with my sword his son Paul, when might I as well have given him some slight wound, or else have disarmed him. And could no one venture to make hint that the thrust was one of unlucky chance, without rousing the Baron's wrath. Had he the interest to have held over me an indictment for the killing of Paul, which I learned had been brought by persons who had wish to gain his favor. Would Sir Francis Wynnington no doubt have striven in behalf of his imprisoned kinsman, but that this good friend of mine were carried off by a fever when had I been not more than four months within the jail. Mourned I in truth when was I told of his

death. Yet was not the half of this my sorrow due to knowledge that I had lost one whose aid might have availed me much. Shall I ne'er forget this faithful guardian, nor the many acts of kindness which he did me. Was his son and heir knighted by King James soon after the new King came upon the throne; and had he married his wife, the Lady Maud, some few weeks before his sire's death. Had I been brought to trial would I most surely have been named innocent of the crime for which had I been indicted. Went Master Porter to London many times and paid large fees from out my rents unto certain learned men of Law to bestir themselves in my behalf. Yet found these same persons all channels blocked by the hand of de Wycherly, who stood high in the favor of King James. Did good Squire Peasley and my old pupil Dick go to Sir Walter of Surrey, and beg of him and as well of his wife to use their interest with the Baron in my behalf. But they only made excuses, telling my friends that their words were like to hurt rather than to help my hopes of release. Passed away the good Queen Bess in the second year of my captivity, and ere I had resolved to make through Porter an appeal to her.

In the month of July, of the year Sixteen Hundred and Nine, died the Baron de Wycherly of an apoplexy. And within a week thereafter came Parson Porter to tell me that the new Baron, who had once been my friend Henry, so far from pursuing his sire's unreasoning revenge against myself, would use his interest to have my liberty restored to me. Looked I now upon myself as already a free man, and did I begin to lay plans for my going to claim Constance. And not long thereafter came there to me one morn with Porter a certain King's Counsel, by

name of Davids. Was he a man of smooth tongue, and much given to the showing of his fine white teeth. Did he say that the indictment gainst myself would be disposed of so soon as had I performed for my King a certain service. For this same was I fitted in peculiar way by reason of my knowledge of the Spanish tongue. Had come to England a vague rumor that was there hatching in or about Madrid a plot, mongst some Catholics of most bigot sort, and aiming gainst the life of James, who had already by God in his wisdom been spared from the gunpowder of Guy Fawkes. Was I now directed to go to Madrid, as if I were a merchant, and to find out whatsoe'er I might touching this matter. Was I not to go to England's Ambassador, since might I thus have suspicion brought upon me of being there in interest of our King, and I would therefore be less like to gain the confidence of they amid whom I should walk. Albeit would I have rather set out then for Picardy than be at such spy's work, I yet put good face upon the matter, and said that I would spare myself no efforts to learn if such a plot in truth did exist. When had Davids told me that I should on my return to England, at once come to him at his home nigh to London and upon the road to Cambridge, did he say that I might now leave the jail. And how sweet was the fresh air without, and how beautiful did the earth look in my eyes, as I moved along beside Parson Porter with a light step, rejoicing in my regained freedom, and for the same thanking God.

XXVIII.

IN OLD MADRID.

From Porter had I a sum sufficient for my needs upon this journey, since was I to pay my own way in the performance of this duty. And in truth had the King, through no great fault of his own, more of honors than of gold to bestow upon such as served him in faithful way. Went I at once unto the farrier, with whom had I left the nag to shoe upon the day of great misfortune. When he perceived me, was there much of wonder in his look; and learned I that the poor beast had died of hunger while awaiting my return. Did I now make to him payment for his work of nigh to eight years gone by; and as well I asked of him if he could direct me to one from whom might I hire a horse to take me forthwith to Portsmouth. Then he made known to me a trader of horses named Brown, who was about to set out for Portsmouth with two cobs. And did I bargain for a ride upon the back of one of these. I now took leave of Parson Porter, thanking him much for his interest in my behalf, and as well for his faithful stewardship of my estates. These had he assured me were in fair condition; and as well did he now with beaming eyes tell me of the goodly sum of my own monies which kept he in a new strong-box at Merton Hall, where slept he of nights that he might the better watch the same. Upon the journey to Portsmouth had my com-

panion Brown much to say touching horses which he loved, and persons whom he hated. Yet was I so taken up with the charm of freedom, and with the sweet hope of seeing Constance ere many weeks should pass by, that I gave small heed to what the fellow were saying to me.

Found I at Portsmouth, on my arrival there that same day, a ship that were taking on board merchandise for Bordeaux, and which were like to set sail within four and twenty hours. Did I bargain with the master of the same to give me passage with him. Then went I to an inn where I lay that night. In the morn went I to a tailor, and made of him purchase of some garments of the fashion of that day. When it were an hour past the noon I went on board the ship, which was named the Sea Witch. It were not until the second day that the winds favored our departure. Did the Sea Witch make the voyage quickly, and meeting with no mishap. At the ancient port of Bordeaux was I forced to tarry not more than three hours ere I found a ship bound for Cadiz. Did this same craft bring to my mind the old tutor whom I had loved, since was its name the Don José.

Were we becalmed in the Bay of Biscay for five days; yet thereafter the ship lost one of her masts in a strong wind which came upon her of a sudden. Still, sailed the Don José with sound hull into the port of Cadiz, where made I landing with the hope that I would soon bring to end the business that had took me into Spain. For after having made show of my patience in prison for nigh to eight years, did I now find myself grown of a sudden one of the most impatient of mortals.

Made I purchase of a sleek, fat mule, with which set I out for Madrid. As I journeyed on did I find myself more

than once fancying the poor mad Knight, Don Quixote, and his esquire Sancho, as riding along the same road which was I now upon. Was I much struck by the darkness of the faces of many whom I passed; and did I deem such persons to be the children in the third or fourth generation of the Moors who had tarried in the land and embraced the Christian faith, when were so many of their people driven forth from Spain. Were the inns for the most part well kept. And in the pleasant nights would I long walk within my chamber, and listen to the songs of love which came from lips of they who sat at their wine below. And would the same notes bear me in fancy into distant Picardy. Saw I upon the hillsides many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. Likewise were people picking grapes in countless vineyards.

Ten days after I had set out from Cadiz, and to be exact on the eighteenth day of the month of September, rode I with many others into the great city of Madrid. Here saw I on every hand evidence of the vast wealth which was coming to Spain from her possessions in the New World. Yet did it then seem to me that the great treasures, pouring in with so much of ease, were in the end like to spread corruption and sloth.

Found I lodgings at an inn named after the great Dame Fortune. Then for the space of one month, went I forth both day and night and intently listened, while did I seem as wishing to make sales of English merchandise, the which might soon be brought to Madrid. And as well I asked much touching the prices of fine wools. Yet put I such high prices upon my pretended merchandise that I got no promises of bargains. Nor could I find wools nigh to as cheap as I would seem to wish for. Unto such persons as

I had heard railing loud gainst England and her ruler, went I in confiding way and told each how had I been held for nigh eight years in an English prison for naught that should merit such. Yet from no one could I draw any hint at the conspiracy which Master Davids had named to me. In truth did I now find the Spanish people in peaceful frame of mind, under the more gentle rule of Philip Third, who had placed himself under the wise guidance of the great Duke of Lerma. Have I since come to the belief that King James had no hand in the sending of me upon this needless chase after assassins, who lived only in the imaginings of some few o'erwrought minds. The mere rumor might have come to the ears of Counsel Davids, when he were about to put an end to the indictment which had so long hung o'er me. And he, thinking to win favor with the King by gaining knowledge of the conspiracy, if such in truth did exist, might have put me to all this trouble and expense for his own benefit. And if this be true, do I for such bear to his memory naught of ill-will, by reason of a certain thing which came about at the end of my month's sojourn in Madrid.

One even at a tavern chanced I to meet one Hernando Blas, whom I found to be a great hater of the English, and who told me that he had known Guy Fawkes, whom did he deem to be of blessed memory. Then in a way of mystery he bid me come to him upon the morrow at some three hours past the noon. Thinking that here might I at last have come upon some trace of the strange conspiracy, did I assure him that I would be with him. Named he a certain house, which had I passed, and told me to ask for him there. And the next day at the hour fixed, I knocked upon the door of that certain house.

When came a serving maid to answer, asked I of her where I should find Blas. Was I bid by her to go up two flights of stairs, and to knock upon the second door. When had I ascended the two flights I perceived a second door toward the front of the house. And was there toward the rear of the house as well a second door. As I remembered Blas to be attired in shabby garments, did I think I were like to find him at the rear part, rather than the front of this house, which in truth showed upon the inside as well as without, signs of decay. So went I toward the rear and knocked upon the second door. Came there a firm yet pleasing voice bidding me to enter. When had I opened wide the door, did I perceive a room most neat, yet plainly fitted up. Nigh to a window stood a gentleman whom I took to be about sixty years of age. Was he dressed in faded garments, and wore a patch over one eye. Yet in his other eye shone there a light which bespoke a great intellect. Aside from the disfigurement of the patch did I deem the face a handsome and a striking one. And was there about the man a dignity which became him well, albeit looked the same somewhat strange amid such surroundings. While did I explain to him how I had come by a mischance into his room, whereas was I looking for Don Hernando Blas, who no doubt lodged on the same floor toward the front of the house, was the glance of his one eye full upon myself, as if he were well weighing me. Then did he, in most courteous fashion, say:

"Wilt thou no doubt find this same person within the second door upon the other side of yonder stair-case. Lodges some one there, albeit I had not known his name."

And now when had I thanked him for his guidance and withdrew, did I note that the stranger had about him a

martial air, as if he had seen battle-fields. As well I perceived a certain pinched look that led me to this thought:

"Mayhap yonder most striking person doth suffer even now from hunger. Yet would I not have dared to offer him a coin."

When knocked I at the second door beyond the staircase, was I admitted by Blas, who after greeting me, did in a mysterious fashion produce two well-worn letters and a small painting. Were these two letters said by him to have been writ by Guy Fawkes. Were both brief and asking for the loan of a certain sum of money. Were these sent, not to Blas, but unto two others, whose names can I not now repeat. And did my man tell me that he believed Guy received not the certain monies for the which had he asked. The small painting was a portrait of Fawkes, which had Blas himself made from memory. And to my eyes the gunpowder man looked to be a most dark and determined fellow. When asked I of Blas if he had ever had it in his mind to follow in some bloody way the example of the departed Fawkes, did he shake much his head, and say that in truth such great honors were not for him. Then went he on for some time to laud high his hero, while I with much of patience harkened to his words. At last found I the chance to ask of him who might be the stranger who lodged upon the same floor, and whose room had I entered in mistake for his own. Made he answer:

"Oh, him of the one-eye! Doth he call himself, so am I told, Don Miguel de Cervantes. Did he once write a book about some crazy Knight—his name can I not remember —who went about with a dull ass of an esquire called Sancho Panza. Made the book some noise, yet doth the

fellow live still in poverty. But not so with our great Lope de Vega, who writes his plays by the thousand. Why, will this same man write one from the start unto finish in a single day. Oh, thou shouldst see enacted one of his great plays!"

"Have I seen one of de Vega's plays," I now said. And had I in truth beheld such while busy at my work of spying for Counsel Davids.

"And wast thou not greatly pleased with that same play?" did he then demand.

"In truth," made I reply, "were it not so bad for the work of four-and-twenty hours."

And now did I sound the praises of his neighbor's great book, telling him how had the same much lightened my hours in the prison. Yet could I not get this fellow to talk of aught save Lope de Vega and his countless plays, save at such times when would he again relate to me memories of Guy Fawkes. Right glad was I when seemed at last his tongue to tire; and then upon pretext of pressing business, I took leave of him.

That same even were I minded to take my supper at a certain tavern, where were both the food and wine much to my liking. When was I seated, with a fat roasted capon before me, and as well a flask of red wine, saw I to come within the room none other than Cervantes. Was there now about his eye a hungry look; yet did I hear him call for naught save one small loaf and a cup of cheap wine. Now made I bold to rise and go unto the great writer, who seemed to recall having seen me, and whom I in way of much respect begged to join me at my supper. Looked he at myself in a cold manner, as if he were loathe to thus honor me. Then I told him that I had

read at least a dozen times over the adventures of Don Quixote, of the which would I never tire. Did he now look at me with more of favor. But when I related how his book had proved a blessing to me while I were detained in prison for no just cause, he sprang up and warmly clasped my right hand. Then looked he at myself, his whole face beaming with pleasure. And in ready way he now consented to come and sit with me at the capon and the wine. With his help was the fowl brought down to well-picked bones. Though ate Cervantes in slow manner, perceived I that he did this for the appearance of it. For in truth when had he begun, were he half-famished. Did we empty this flask, and as well two more of the same kind. Meanwhile my guest said much, now in wise and serious fashion, and again in words of wit that brought from me much of laughter. When I told him of his neighbor's great admiration for Lope de Vega and his writings, he gave with his shoulders one small shrug. And then in tone and manner which bespoke the truth that were his mind free from aught of envy, he said:

"Yet with all the hurry of their make, have the plays of de Vega a vast deal that doth commend them."

When I told him that it had been my pleasure to have speech with Shakespeare, did he show much of interest, and asked of me many questions touching our poet. When had the third flask of good wine been emptied, went we forth into the streets and strolled there for about the space of one hour. Then Cervantes, perceiving that we were night to the house where he lodged, asked of me if I would not come and be his guest for a while. Gladly I consented to do this. When came we into his poor room, he lighted his small lamp which served but to give the

place a most gloomy look. Then did I glance about to find where this true writer kept his books; but of such saw I few. Perceiving what I had in mind, he said:

"Thou art looking for my books. Have I neither money nor room for many of the same. Besides, didst thou not note in my history of Don Quixote that I were a student of men more than of books?"

Did I in my mind quickly run o'er his great story, and I perceived the same thing which had he pointed out. And now came to me remembrance that as well in Shakespeare's lodgings I had seen few books. Then asked I if we were not some day to have more of his just-minded, yet mad-acting Knight and the dull-witted follower.

"Some day," made he reply, "the power which did incite me to the writing of that history, will urge me to a continuance of the same."

When I expressed to him my wonder that the world had not rewarded in fit way his labors, he smiled grimly, and said:

"Yet hath not this same thing happened many times before? Look at Camoens of Portugal, who sang so grandly of the bright history of his country. Came to him for his lofty poem most small reward. Did he die in great poverty; and when some fifteen years thereafter his countrymen perceived at last his greatness, and were minded to build for him a costly monument, were it no easy task to find his place of burial."

"Why could Portugal not bestow her rewards upon Camoens while yet he lived?" I exclaimed.

"Yet, sir," went he on, "thou shouldst mark the immortal side of this coming of tardy justice to his memory."

Then for some moments was there in his face a look, as if for the time had his thoughts left the past and as well the present and flown into the future. At length he arose and going to a small cupboard, he took therefrom a flask of wine and a glass, which he filled for myself. Took I this merely to give him chance to play host, which did he with an ease and grace which I noted with admiring eyes. And now did I point out to him that since I had gained so much of pleasure, and as well of profit, from his book, were I still greatly in his debt. So would I now fain discharge this same in part by placing in his hands a small sum of money, which might be of some service to him. Did I at first perceive his eye to be sharply fixed upon myself, but changed his look, as went I on to say:

"Canst thou hold this money in trust until the day when the world shall give thee such rewards as are meet. Then canst thou bestow it on one, who may then have need of the same."

"For such an one," said he now, "will I consent to hold thy gift."

Whereat pressed I upon him the largest coins of gold which chanced I then to have within my purse. Then I asked of him if, in the continuance of the adventures of Don Quixote, Sancho Panza were like to get the island he were ever looking for. Did Cervantes smile, and make reply:

"Shall he get for a time what he thinks to be his island; and will he not govern the same in such bad fashion."

Then I make bold to ask of him if Sancho's master would be at his elbow in the governing. Did he answer:

"Will Don Quixote counsel him, ere he leaves to take his government, in this way:—"

Then did my host repeat to me in substance that sublime charge which, in the Second Book of the Adventures, the warm-hearted Knight delivered unto his esquire, when went forth this one to assume his power and honors. And while he spoke his lofty words, did the eye of great Cervantes glow from thoughts true, noble and magnanimous. When had he at length come to end of this, he sat with a far-off look upon his face. Fearing that my presence might now prove wearying unto him, I took my leave. Did he bid me a good-night in most kindly tone; and then in absent way took he his lamp and lit my way adown the stairs. When last I saw his face in the dim light, seemed he lost in his own deep meditations.

On the next day I declared that it were great waste of time to tarry longer at Madrid in the search for conspirators, and fixed I upon the coming morn for my departure. More than once that day had I the wish to again have speech with Cervantes; yet did I not deem that I had right to thrust myself again upon him by reason of having made him present of a few coins.

Now it chanced that just before the sun-set I was minded to go forth and wander in the streets. And when at length I paused at a certain corner, I saw coming along a coach, toward which were the throngs on either side the way gazing. Waved many their hands, and cried out in tones of admiration. And then beheld I within the coach a gentleman of middle age, who bowed in pleased manner, now this way, and now that way. Asked I of one standing nigh to name to me the person in the coach. Made he reply:

"Dost thou not know that yonder is great Lope de Vega?"

As passed by the coach and the shouting crowd, my eye fell on one across the way, who stood and watched the moving sight. When looked I the more closely did I perceive this person to be none other than Cervantes, who himself to my mind deserved a far greater triumph at the hands of his own countrymen than were now being given unto the swift-writing Lope de Vega. And yet in the face of my host of yester even was there no look of envy or of bitterness. In the stead did he smile in amused way. Then giving a small shrug of shoulder, he turned and walked away with a firm, soldier stride. And have I never since had one doubt, but that the wise Cervantes then had within his mind the firm belief that on his tomb would be surely placed the fair laurel of immortality. And was he content.

XXIX.

HAPPY YEARS.

EARLY upon the morrow I left behind me great Madrid, and with such speed as the mule could make, passed I along the pleasant roads towards Cadiz. Were the weather fine; and at the noon of the ninth day of this my journey came I to the port of Cadiz. After I had sold the mule for the half of its price when made I purchase of the beast, did I go among the ships. Here found I a craft by name of Isabele, which were to set sail for London, so soon as the winds should favor. Did I bargain with the master for my passage, and went on board at once. When I awoke upon the morrow, were we already at sea, moving on in rapid way with a good South gale behind the ship. And yet upon this voyage were we, to my displeasure, oft becalmed. Once came we nigh to being cast upon the shore. Had I asked of the master, a white-bearded Spaniard, to point out to me the shores of Picardy, should we chance to pass in sight of these. And so it came to pass that, caught in a wild storm from Northwest the Isabele had no power to resist its sweep in toward the land. And then, pointing to the rocks that lay within a mile of us, and toward which were we being driven, the master with a grim smile called out to me:

"Yonder, Sir Walter, are the shores of Picardy!"

But soon came there a sudden shift of wind into the

East, and by God's mercy the Isabele in quick way escaped her perils. On the even of the ninth day of November did the ship drop anchor in the River Thames, and within sight of the Tower of London. At daybreak on the morrow went I on shore, and hiring of a trader a horse, set I out upon the Cambridge road and came to the house of Davids. Found I this King's Counsel within, and quickly poured into his ears all that had I seen or heard in Spain touching the mission upon which had he sent me thither. Stole there a look of disappointment into his countenance, when had I made it plain to him that there was naught of truth in the rumor of a conspiracy gainst James. For now might he have no chance to reveal a grave danger unto his Sovereign, whose favor he no doubt had much of longing for. But soon he assured me that the indictment gainst myself had been laid aside, and in truth no longer existed. Did he next give unto himself much of credit for the part which he had taken in this matter. Had I offered him, in way of gratitude, a sum of money great or small, would he no doubt have made acceptance of the same. Yet did I not deem myself as bounden to do this thing. And perceived I a look of some reproach upon his face when took I my leave of him.

Next made I purchase of a good bay horse, paying for the same with a bill, since was my supply of money now exhausted. Rode I hard toward Merton Hall; and when had I come to my home, was I given hearty welcome by Porter, and by tenants old and new, and as well by my neighbor. Did I cause Porter to open the new strong-box in large way. When had I filled well my own purse, for use upon the journey which I had now in mind, I left a goodly sum to be bestowed upon the poor on the estates of

Merton, and as well within the country round about. I now deemed it as befitting my condition to take with me a serving man. Found I a fellow to my liking, by name of Joseph. Was he scarce one-and-twenty years of age; yet bald of head had he already grown. And did the knowledge of his small duties seem to weigh upon his mind. Had I gone so long without a servant to attend me, that at first I gave Joseph but few tasks. Yet for all this seemed his careworn look to increase. Then did I, growing slothful, much enlarge his duties from time to time; and at length I noted that he wore a look which seemed to bespeak more cheerfulness of mind. Rode I to Dover, and then crossing the water passed along the roads of Picardy with eager thoughts, and anon most pleasant day-dreams.

Was it one hour past the noon when rode we up to the old Ship Inn. Found I that this same was now kept by the son of the much-speaking host, who had been there eight years afore. Was the new publican as silent as had been his father given to talk. As he brought to me my dinner, I asked of him if all were well up at the chateau. Made he answer that he had heard of no illness, albeit for all his knowledge there might have been deaths and burials there. Had I small wish for food; and soon rising from the table I dressed myself with much of care for the visit which had I so long looked forward to.

When having climbed the hill and come unto the door of the stone chateau, I knocked thereat with beating heart. Appeared a tall serving-man in answer to my summons; and had he scarce opened wide the door when I perceived within the large hall the Count de Brecy. Turned his glance upon me, and as he seemed to perceive who I

were, a pleasant look stole o'er his face. Coming quickly toward me, he seized both my hands and shaking these he said with a warmth at which did I then much wonder:

"Art thou come, Sir Walter, for thy faithful Constance! Shalt thou have her, and with her all happiness! Have I as well happiness—for three short months gone by I myself took a young wife. And shalt thou soon look upon this divine creature."

Did I now perceive why this man had so changed toward myself. Since had he found a new mistress for his chateau, was he in truth willing and ready to part with his niece, who was no longer of service unto him. And since would she be bestowed upon no one save myself, was he well pleased that I should now come to take her. As well, was there within his hands her small fortune, for payment of the which, as I thereafter learned, was he not now prepared. And so were he minded to make himself agreeable to me. Did I on my part warm toward de Brecy, for no other cause than that he no longer stood within my path. Had word of my coming been sent to Constance; but did she tarry for a while, no doubt that she might appear to more advantage in the matter of her dress. Yet when I at length beheld her, was I filled with admiration at her riper beauty, and her more rounded form. As sank she into my arms, she murmured:

"Did I not tell thee, dear Walter, how I would wait?"

And yet vowed I then that there should be no more waiting. Asked she for one short month; yet did I allow her the respite of but four-and-twenty hours, though her new sister, the Countess de Brecy, a woman of comely face yet artful look, made pretence of pleading for her. And were we upon the next day made man and wife by a sad-eyed young Parson of the faith of the Huguenots. Him

deemed I as too good a man to covet her whom I perceived he had loved as truly as had I myself. Then passed we forth from the halls of the de Brecys, Constance with a radiant smile upon her face, and I rejoicing deeply in her love.

* * * * * * *

Yet were me wedded once again in Merton Church by Parson Porter, my love having given her consent to worship after the manner of her English spouse. And stood Constance with myself and shed some tears beside the Good Knight's tomb. Was she much beloved of our servants and my tenants. Nor were there, among all the neighbors round about, they who spoke of her ill and envious words.

Passed by full many happy years, in the which came to us four dear children. Is there my heir, Philip, named after his good grandsire; and the younger Constance, who doth much remind me of her mother. The next in age is my Walter, who hath great love for his small sister, Lucy, named after the mother of whom had I no remembrance.

Once did there come to us upon a visit Sir Walter of Surrey and his wife, who had retained the brightness of her eyes, albeit were there some few wrinkles upon her brow. Had she yet many admirers, men of family as well as bachelors, whom was it her pleasure still to charm. Perceived she my great love for Constance; and, I thought, having no mind to waste her enchantments, did Maud bestow none of these upon me. Gave she to myself assurance that she had ever held me as blameless of her brother's death. Will I not believe one half the tales of that lady's doings, which are oft told by careless tongues. And of those which I do believe in part, have many been

twisted in most gross and unreasoning way. Hath Sir Walter of Surrey been made by King James a Baronet; and might I myself have been as well named one of the new order. Yet am I not minded to become a small Baron, being full content to remain a Knight, as were before me my true and valiant sires. When am I gone, will no doubt my Philip ask of Charles to be made Baronet.

Have I much of the time played tutor unto my children. And do they all speak the Spanish and the French as well, though were they for a while much given to the mixing up of the three tongues. But at last did I prevail upon them to write and speak only in one language at a time. Have my two boys gone twice upon a visit to Squire Richard Peasley of Perling Manor, whom they have much of fondness for. Do they say he hath become a great reader of books, and that he tells to them and to his three sons many tales of history.

Hath it seemed strange to me that the two great writers whom was it my good fortune to chance upon, should both pass to their reward upon the same day. Read my children the writings of these wise men with much of zest, and asking of me many questions concerning them. Do I recall Shakespeare as the greater genius; still do I remember Miguel Cervantes as the greater hero. And in truth hath the heroic ever appealed most strongly unto me. Though had he not, like to Shakespeare, fair recompense for his great labor, yet did Cervantes ever face misfortune with a manly scorn.

Am I now much disquieted touching the welfare of my country; since hath Charles, upon the one hand, shown too strong a will to uphold at any cost that which he doth deem the right and duty of the Kingly office. And yet

upon the other hand, the freedom-loving leaders of they who put not their trust in him seek to hedge about his Majesty with difficulties, the which do much hamper him in the doing of his bounden duty. And doth each side, with some little truth, make accusation gainst the other of a lack of real sincerity. When comes the storm, do I pray God that its fury may last but for a little while.

Doth my heir Philip declare himself as loving much the King, and having desire to be of service unto him. Is he opposed by young Sir Wilton Thorne, who comes oft to Merton, and fences well gainst my son with foils, and likewise with many words. Yet when is my elder daughter within the room will Sir Wilton ever keep his eyes upon her. And doth she to my mind seem to find some small pleasure in the knowledge that she has aroused his admiration. To these matters pays my Walter small heed, since is he ever talking of the colonies in the New World. And is it his fondest hope that he shall one day set sail for Virginia.

And now do I put by the pen, and close this small history, which shall I read to Constance, as we sit together in the ripe autumn of our lives.

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